

Welkom به خيڙ راغلي  
Welkom أهلاً و سهلاً  
Croeso  
Welcome  
Bienvenue  
እንኳን ደህና መጣህ።  
Hoan nghênh



greater london  
fostering.



# A young person's guide to fostering



We are here to welcome you to GLF. Follow us through this guide to find out all about GLF.

# Welcome to GLF!

This guide will help you find out about GLF, your foster carers and all the people that are here to help you. Some of this guide is to provide you with information about fostering. There also some sections for you to fill out. These sections can be used to tell your foster family a little bit about you and your family.

Fostering means going to live with a 'foster family' when it's not possible to live with your family. Fostering is sometimes referred to as "going into care" or "being looked after." Being in foster care does not mean that your family does not love you.

There are many reasons that children and young people come into care, far too many to detail in this section. If you have any doubt about why you are in care then you should contact your social worker who will be happy to help. There is a section later on in the guide that will give you information on who you need to contact in different situations.

We think that it's important that you can grow up in a family home with a parent or parents who will take care of you. Foster care provides children and young people with a safe, secure and nurturing family environment, and allows them to keep in contact with their own families if they wish.

You may be with your foster family for a very short time, possibly weeks or even a few days. Some children and younger people could be with their foster families for a number of years.

If there are any other children in that family, they will become your foster brothers and sisters.



No matter how long you're with your foster family, they will treat you as if you are part of the family.

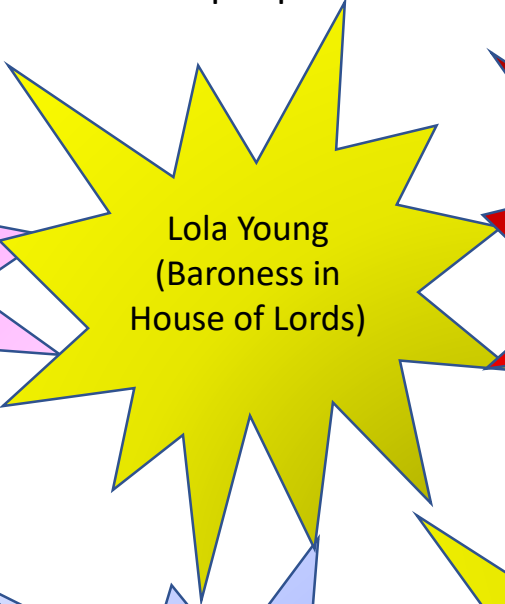


# You are not alone


There are about 50,000 children and young people in care around the UK. The below well known people were also in foster care...




Michael Gove  
(Ex Cabinet Minister)




Lola Young  
(Baroness in  
House of Lords)



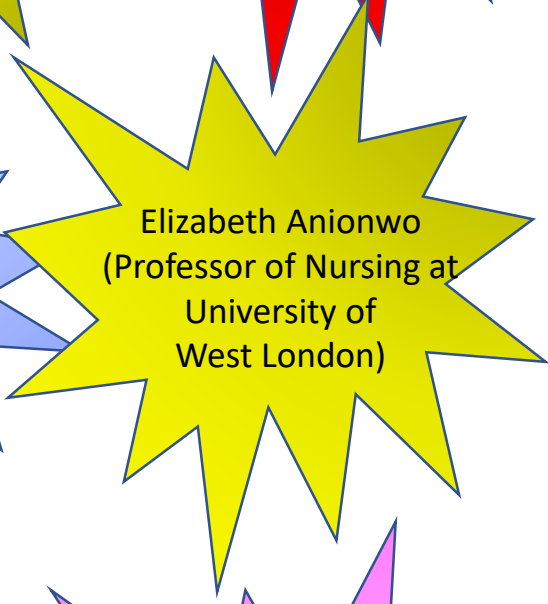
Benjamin Perks  
(UN Human  
Rights Diplomat)




Ashley John-Baptiste  
(BBC Journalist  
& X-Factor Contestant)




Pierce Brosnan  
(Actor)




Elizabeth Anionwo  
(Professor of Nursing at  
University of  
West London)




Simone Biles (Gymnast  
who is a four time  
Olympic Gold  
Medallist)



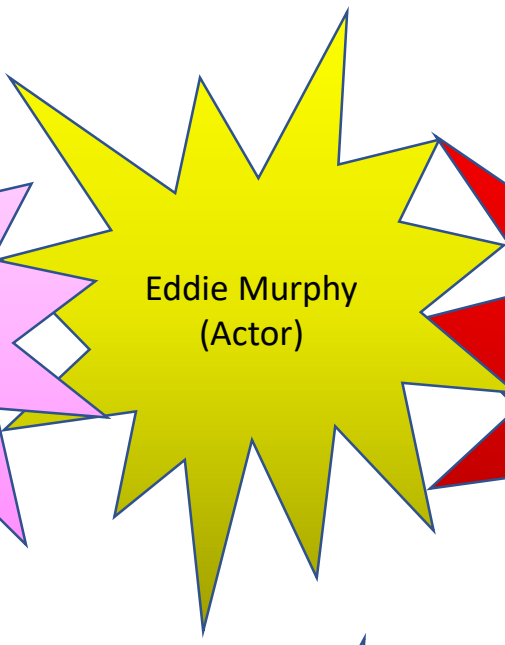
Marcus Clarke  
(Puppeteer in  
The Muppets)



Meera Mistry  
(Senior NHS  
Manager)



Cher  
(Singer & Actor)



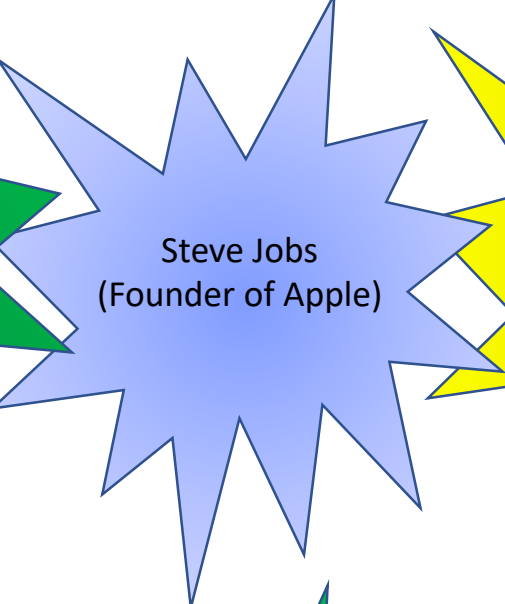
Eddie Murphy  
(Actor)



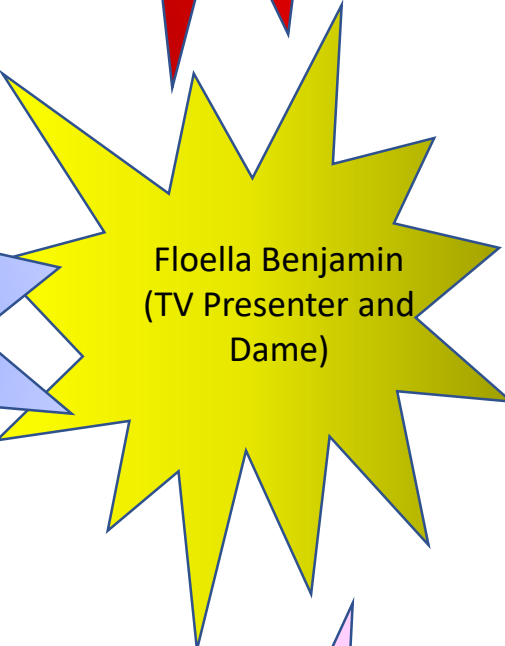
Coco Channel  
(Fashion Designer  
And  
businesswoman)



Seal  
(Singer)




Steve Jobs  
(Founder of Apple)




Floella Benjamin  
(TV Presenter and  
Dame)



Keyshia Cole  
(Singer)



Kathy Burke  
(Actor)



Tricky  
(British record  
producer and Rapper)

# 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. We organise lots of events during the school holidays – we've been to pantomimes, the seaside, theme parks, ice skating, high ropes and lots more.



Our events team organise and schedule events at  
GLF



Everyone at GLF is here to support you and help you reach your full potential and goals. Most importantly, we're here to talk if you need us.

# Your supervising social worker

Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am your foster family's supervising social worker.

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.

*Do you have any questions for me?*

A few things about me...

I love –

I don't like -

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

It is my job to make sure that your foster family's supervising social worker 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. Our phone number is 0208 347 8741.

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



# All about me

This section will give you the chance to tell your new foster family about you and what you like and dislike. You could also ask other looked after children or birth children in your new foster home to fill out similar questions about themselves.

My name is:.....

My birthday is: .....

My ethnicity: .....

Language(s) I speak: .....

My religion or belief:.....

My school is:.....

My favourite TV show is:.....

My favourite sport is:.....

My favourite book is:.....

My favourite music is:.....

My favourite computer game is:.....

An interesting fact about me is:.....



It's important for your foster family to help you grow as a person, follow your beliefs and do great things in the future

# Food and Drink

Write about the food and drink that you like best and the things you do not like.

Food and drink that I like:



Food and drink that I don't like:



It can be fun trying new foods, and even learning to cook. You might have the chance to try new foods with your foster family.



# Positive Aspirations

Being in care doesn't mean you can't have dreams. A lot of young people 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 Youth 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!

**Do something awesome today!**



Everyone can have dreams and goals. Believe in yourself and your abilities, and you'll 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.....

When I leave school I want to be a.....

I'm Emily, 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.



It's important to keep planning for your future. Think about your strengths and how you might use them to support your future.



# My foster family

My foster carers' names are.....

Other people who live with them.....

They live at .....

## What should my foster carers do?

There are many things that your foster carer will do for you. This may differ between placements but below are some of the things that you should expect:

- Provide support for your educational needs
- Value you for who you are
- Encourage you to participate in decisions and plans for your future
- Enable you to follow a religion and observe religious holidays and festivals
- Treat you as part of their family
- Help you develop as an individual
- Teach you life skills for independent living

What do you need to do to make this a positive time with your foster family? .....

.....

.....

.....

.....



# Your Rights

Every human has rights and this includes children and young people. In the UK there are laws such as the Children's Act (1989) which will ensure that you are treated fairly and justly wherever you are living. Your rights will include but are not restricted to the following:

- The right to healthcare and education
- The right to protection if you are being or have been harmed
- The right to be treated fairly and with respect, regardless of your background including your ethnicity, your religion or belief, a disability, whether you are straight or lesbian, gay, bisexual or whether you are male, female or transgender.
- The right to be helped by Social Services if you are in need of help and support
- The right to see what is written about you and to make your voice heard
- The right to complain

*“Don't look too far into the future, just look at tomorrow. One day at a time. Can you win tomorrow? Can you make progress? The answer is yes, you have a choice and tomorrow you're going to win”*

– Joe Wicks MBE, also known as The Body Coach, is a British fitness coach, television presenter, social media personality and author.

# How we can live together

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

- Show respect to people both inside and outside the home
- Attend school regularly or take part in some form of education
- Join in with family meals and events
- Respect agreed home times
- Value diversity and not discriminate on grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender
- Respect the house guidelines. All families and homes have some sort of guidelines in place and these will differ dependent on where you are staying.

I must .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

I must not .....

.....

.....

.....

.....



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

# Care Plans and Reviews

The care plan will be put together by your social worker. The care plan details the decisions that have been made about your care for the duration of your stay with your foster carer. It will make sure that everything goes well for you and also has a checklist to make sure that everything has happened as per the plan that was set out for you. Remember, it is your right to ask your social worker for your care plan.

Reviews are meetings which Social Services must hold for all children and young people in care. It is in these reviews that you will be able to have your say about your care plan and make sure that everyone is keeping to the targets.

You will have regular review meetings to discuss your care plan and how you are getting on whilst you are in foster care. These meetings will be chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). Your Social Worker or someone in the Social Services team will inform you who your IRO is and how you can get hold of them. It is very important that you attend your review meetings so that you have an input into decisions about your life.

Your first review meeting will take place after you have been looked after by your foster family for four weeks. The next meeting will take place after three months and then they will take place every six months thereafter.



Remember, you have a voice - use it! Tell your social worker what is important to you so it is included in your care plan.

# Allowances

Children and young people who are being looked after by foster families are entitled to pocket money and allowances. The amount that you receive will depend on your age. Your allowance will be agreed between you, your social worker and your new foster family.

You will also receive a clothing allowance, money for activities and transport. Again, if you have any questions about any of your allowances you should discuss with your foster family and your social worker.

Keeping track of money, living within your means and keeping out of problem debt are important skills for living independently.



# What if I'm unhappy?

There might be many reasons that you would complain. Here are just a few examples:

- You are being treated badly or unfairly by a GLF worker or foster member
- Your views are not being listened to or not taken seriously
- You aren't getting what you need – for example to do with your education, health, social life, or money
- You are being punished unfairly
- You are being discriminated against (for example because of your race, disability, sexual orientation or something else)

If you feel like you're not being listened to, you can also talk to Registered Manager, Rahima Kadir 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  
Mirror Works, Unit MI 1.01,  
12 Marshgate Lane, London, E15 2NH

Or if you want you can phone her on: 020 8347 8741 or her mobile - 07795 632 042. You can email her on [rahima.kadir@greaterlondonfostering.org](mailto:rahima.kadir@greaterlondonfostering.org)



If you are still not happy with things, you can contact Rahima 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 supervising social worker for your foster carer(s) will help to explain this stage of the process to you.



It is your right to speak up when you are unhappy. Nothing bad will happen - we want to make sure you are listened to and problems are dealt with.

Sometimes things may seem a bit daunting and complicated. If this is the case then ask your social worker or someone you trust to help you.

# Advocates

If you don't feel like you can speak to your social worker, foster carers or anybody else you could try an advocate. An advocate is someone that will speak up on your behalf. They will also be able to provide you with information, advice and legal representation.

What you say to an advocate is strictly confidential and does not have to be passed on to your social worker. That is unless you want them to or in case that you or others are in danger.

If you want someone to talk to you could try the **National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)**. NYAS is a charity working for children and young people in England and Wales. The telephone number is: FREEPHONE 0808 808 1001 Send an email to: [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net). They have a website: [www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NYAS.YP](http://www.facebook.com/NYAS.YP)

You can always ask your local authority social worker or your foster carer's supervising social worker for more information about what an advocate does and how you can get one.



Know that you're not alone in this and people want to help you.

# Bullying and staying safe online

Bullying consists of three basic types of abuse – emotional, verbal and physical. Bullying can include things such as threats, name calling, physical violence, hitting and punching. It can also include bullying over the phone or the computer via social networking sites such as Facebook or Instagram. It should be defined as any action or intimidating act which deliberately upsets you.

People bully others for a number of reasons. These reasons could include wanting to be Perceived as popular or tough. Sometimes people bullying others out of jealousy or even because they are being bullied themselves.

If you feel that you are being bullied at school, at home or in the community then you should definitely speak to someone. You could speak to your teacher, foster carer or social worker.

- Don't post any personal information online – like your address, email address or mobile number.
- Think carefully before posting pictures or videos of yourself. Once you've put a picture of yourself online most people can see it and may be able to download it, it's not just yours anymore.
- Keep your privacy settings as high as possible - Never give out your passwords
- Don't befriend people you don't know and don't meet up with people you've met online. Speak to your parent or carer about people suggesting you do. Remember that not everyone online is who they say they are
- Think carefully about what you say before you post something online Respect other people's views, even if you don't agree with someone else's views doesn't mean you need to be rude
- If you see something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried: leave the website, turn off your computer if you want to and tell a trusted adult immediately.



No one deserves to be bullied. so don't put up with it. Talk to someone if you are being bullied - your foster family, a teacher, social worker. Any adult that you trust.



## **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)

## **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 supervising social worker who they can contact at any time. The supervising social worker 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. Anyone looking after Foster Children must be DBS checked and vetted by the agency. Foster 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
- 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. Website:

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

Contact Number: 0800 1111 - 24hrs OR  
there is a particular number for children in care: 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

Contact Number: 0300 1236600 Website:

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

**FPA** a sexual health charity providing information, advice and support on sexual health:

Website: [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk) Contact Number:  
0808 808 4994

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

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

Contact Number: 0207 832 5848

**Stonewall:** the lesbian, gay and bisexual equality charity

Website: [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk) Contact number: 020 75931850

**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)

**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>

**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](http://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 supervising social worker who works with your foster carer.

*"I feel like people are expecting me to fail, therefore, I expect myself to win."*

– Lewis Hamilton (Formula One Racing Car Driver)

## 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.

# Young Person's Guide Reply Slip

Your Name:.....

Has your foster family's supervising social worker 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 supervising social worker, any time!**

.....  
.....  
.....



We will be there to support you. We will help you settle in with your foster family and we welcome you to GLF!

