

living with



Meow



foster



Woof
woof

carers



This magazine belongs to:



I am years old

I live at:



This is a picture of me:



Sometimes mums and dads have problems which mean they can't look after you properly.

This might mean that you have to be looked after by another family... a foster family. We sometimes call this being 'in care' or being 'looked after'.



Ben, 7 and Seren, 10, live happily with foster families but they still remember how frightened they were at first.



You are not going to live with foster carers because you have done something wrong.

Ben



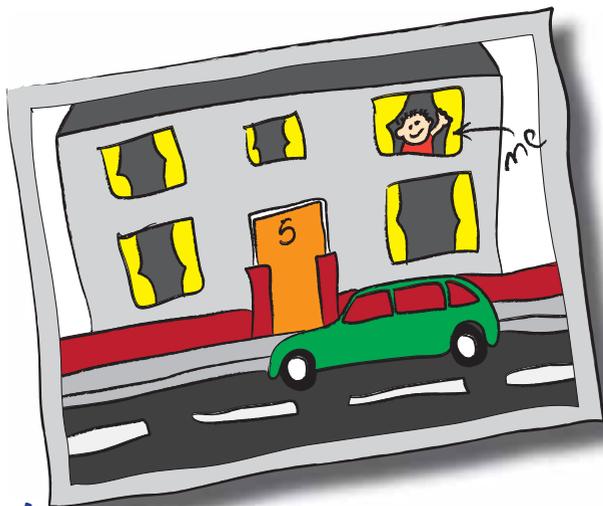
If you are going to live with foster carers for the first time it's okay to feel a bit scared but your new family will look after you.

Seren

Ben and Seren hope their stories will help you.

Moving in

Seren's foster carers understood how she felt and helped her settle into her new home... she liked having her own bedroom.



Ben was scared but he knew he would be safe with his new foster family... and he would have other children to play with.



When you first go to live with foster carers you might feel...



happy



scared



sad



like crying
all the time



angry

Your foster carers won't ever try to take the place of your mam and dad.

What you like

Your foster carers want you to be happy so tell them what you like... and what you don't like. I told mine that I like swimming and I hate oranges.

shark!



I like playing football and my foster carers take me to see matches some weekends.



Tell your foster carers what you like.

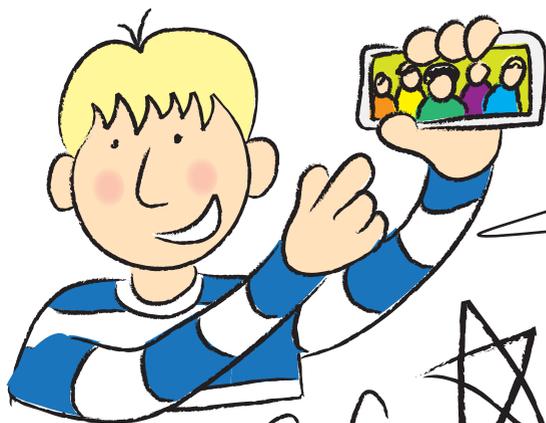
Here are some ideas to get you started:

- bedroom light on or off
- favourite foods
- best lessons at school
- things you like doing outside school



Family and friends

You'll be able to see people in your family unless there's a good reason not to.



My brother and sisters can't live with me but my social worker helps me to see them as often as possible.



$$5 \times 3 = 15$$

If you will be living with your foster carers for a long time and they live a long way from the school you go to, you might have to change schools.

If this happens, everyone will help you settle in and make new friends.

My foster carers helped me to settle into my new school and I now have lots of new friends.



Will there be rules?

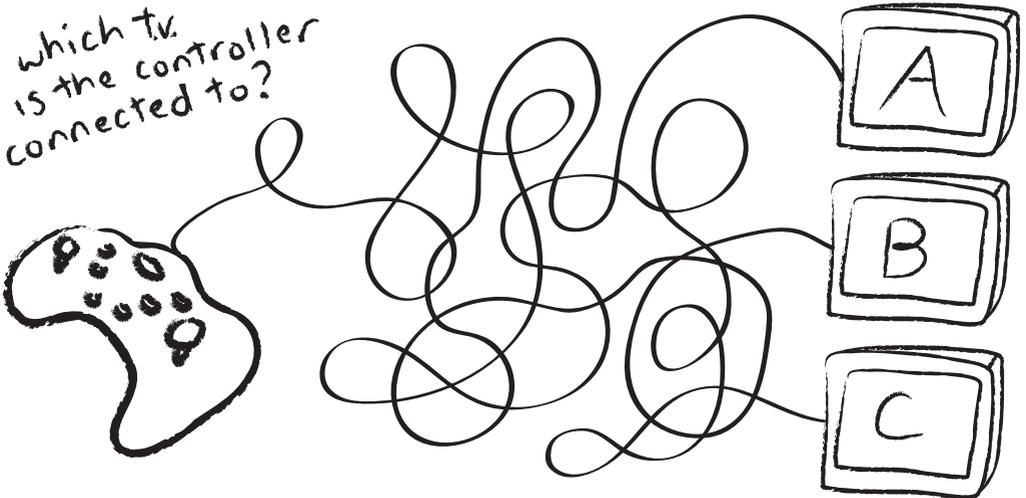
Seren's foster carers have rules to keep everyone who lives in their home safe but they must also stick to some rules themselves.

Ben likes watching television downstairs with his foster carers after he has done his schoolwork.

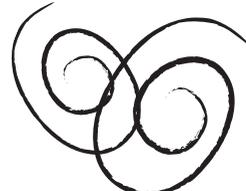


Your foster carers will give you pocket money. The amount you get depends on how old you are and where you live.

Which tv. is the controller connected to?



Know your rights!



Ben and Seren think you should know that children all over the world have rights... and that includes you!

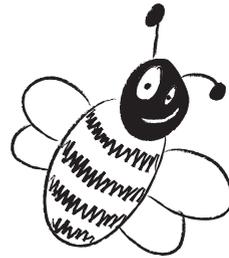
Here are some of them:

- going to school
- being listened to
- having somewhere to live
- being healthy
- having time to play
- having healthy food to eat
- keeping safe
- not being hurt

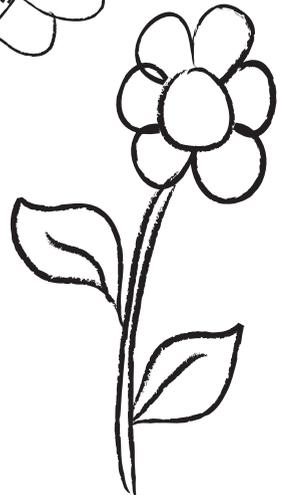
If you don't like something, tell your foster carer or social worker.



Don't forget, it's your life and it's important you have your say about decisions that affect you.



buzzzzzz



Extra rights

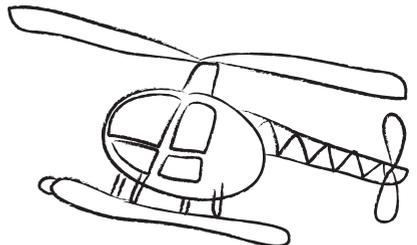
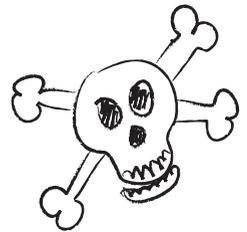
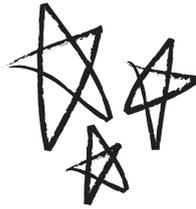
Now you are living with foster carers you have even more rights



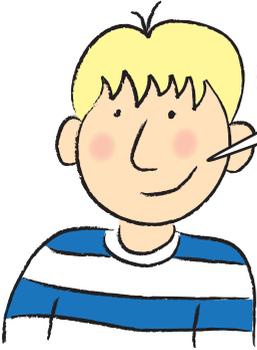
Did you know you can:

- ask to see what is written about you
- complain about things you are not happy about
- have pocket money
- have your say about living with your foster carers

I like spending my pocket money



People who will help you



There will be a lot of new people in your life. They all want to help you to be happy



Some of their job titles can be a bit long... don't worry if you forget some of them at first

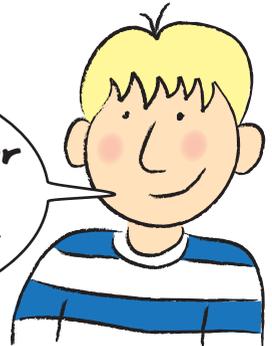
Your foster carers:

- will know how to look after you
- will be there to help you
- will go to meetings with you
- will listen to you no matter what you want to talk about
- will help you to understand your rights
- won't ever try to take the place of your mam and dad



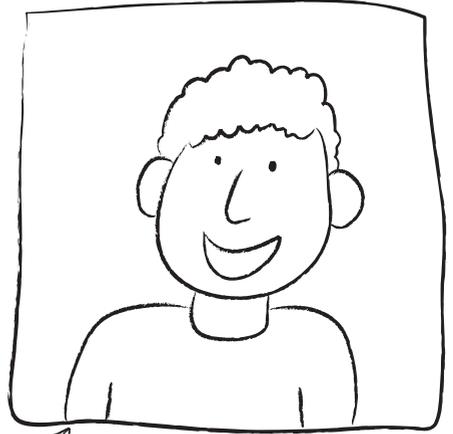
Colour in

My foster carers have two older children who play football in the park with me



Your social worker:

- will meet you and talk to you about what is happening
- will visit you at your new home
- will talk to your foster carers on your behalf
- will help to change things you are not happy about

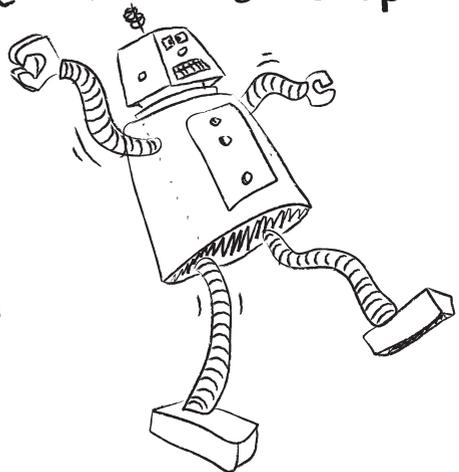
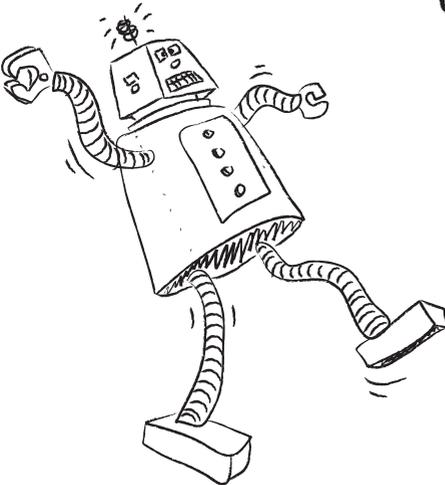


↑
Colour
in



I really like my social worker... he looks out for me and explains things to me

Spot the difference
there are 5 to spot



An advocate is someone who:

- speaks up for you
- makes sure people know what you think
- sorts out any problems you might have
- helps you to understand things
- helps you to sort things out with your foster carer or social worker
- makes sure that your rights are met
- helps you to make a complaint

Colour in ↘



If you want to talk to an advocate tell your social worker or contact NYAS on:

Phone: 0808 808 1001

Text: 07920 213652

Email: help@nyas.net

An independent reviewing officer will:

- run the meetings which look at how you are looked after... your review meeting
- make sure that your wishes and feelings are heard, even if you don't want to go to the meeting
- make sure everyone at the meeting has a chance to speak and that no-one gets cross or shouts
- make notes at your review meetings

The independent reviewing officer works for Torfaen Children's Services.

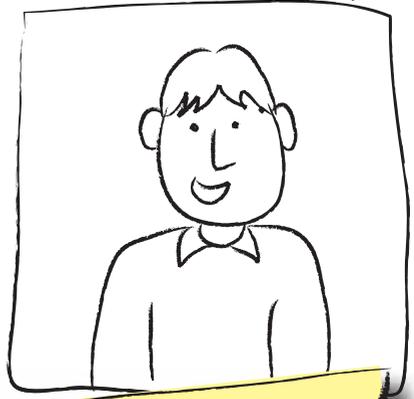
Colour in ↘



A complaints officer is someone who:

Colour
in ↓

- will talk to you on the phone or visit you if you are unhappy about your foster carers
- will listen to you and try to help you sort out your problems if you think you are being treated unfairly
- will take what you say seriously and will try, where possible, to sort things out for you

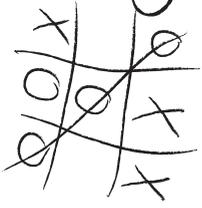
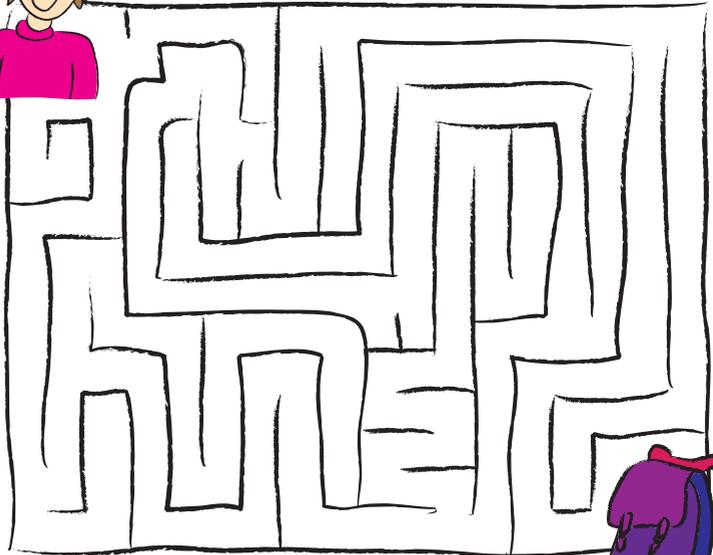


Phone: 01633 648511
Email: socialservices.complaints@torfaen.gov.uk

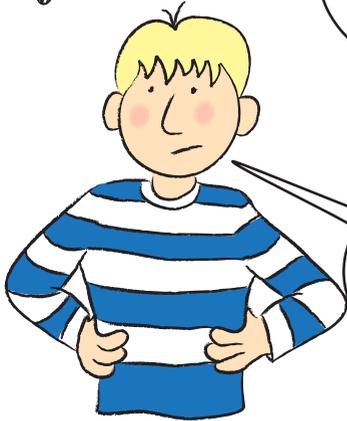
The complaints officer works for Torfaen Children's Services.

If you are not happy with the way you've been treated, please tell your foster carers.

Help
Seren
find
her
bag!



Bullying



Bullying is always wrong... even if it is name-calling... and if you think you are being bullied, you must tell someone



Tell your foster carer, teacher or social worker... they will make sure the bullying stops



Looked after forum

Seren and Ben often meet up with other children who live with foster carers.

We have lots of fun. Why don't you come along?

We learn new things and go on trips to different places



You can talk about things that matter to children who are looked after... like seeing your friends... and tell the people who make decisions, e.g. politicians. Ask your social worker if you can come along.

We look after foster carers too

People become foster carers because they like looking after children and young people.

However, that doesn't mean they don't need support from time to time, just like you do.

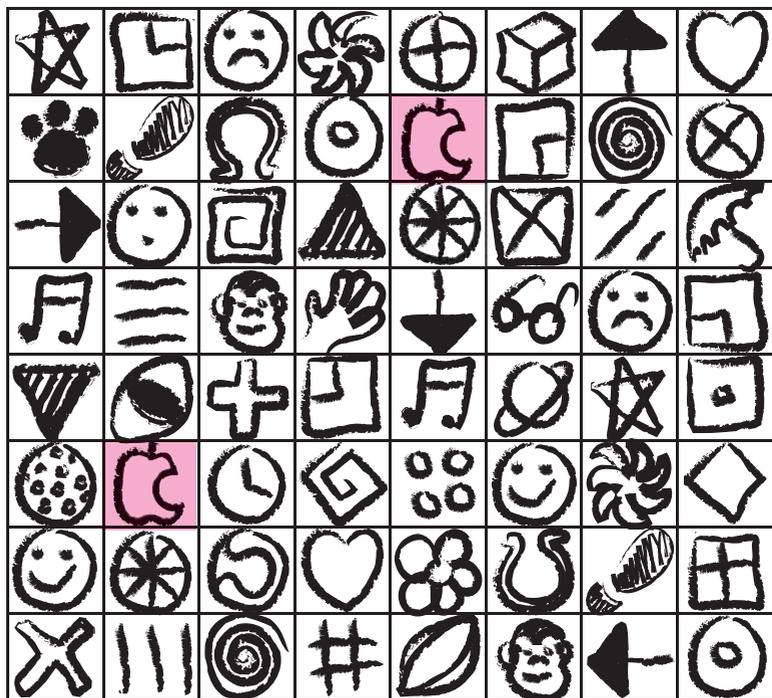
All Torfaen's foster carers have a worker from the Family Placement Team who visits them and helps them to look after you.

This person might be a social worker but it will not be the same social worker that visits and supports you.

Remember, your foster carers just want you to be happy.

Pick a Pair

There are eleven pairs of matching shapes in the table. See if you can find the other ten.



Useful numbers and websites

There are lots of other people you can turn to for advice and help when you are living in foster care. The following are independent, which means they don't work for social services.

Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW)

CIW encourages the improvement of social care services and makes sure that young people being cared for are well looked after.
Phone: 0300 7900 126
Email: CIW@gov.wales

Children's Commissioner for Wales

The Children's Commissioner for Wales has a team that stands up and speaks out for children and young people.
Phone: 01792 765600
(9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Freephone: 0808 801 1000
Email: post@childcomwales.org.uk
www.childcom.org.uk

Children's Legal Advice

Free legal advice for children and young people
Child Law Advice Line:
Freephone: 0300330 5480
www.childrenslegalcentre.com

ChildLine

Free 24-hour helpline. Contact ChildLine about anything – no problem is too big or small.
Freephone: 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

MEIC (pronounced MIKE)

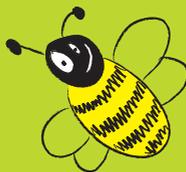
An advocacy helpline for young people.
Phone: 08088023456
Text: 84001
Email: help@meiccymru.org
Online chat: www.meiccymru.org

NYAS

To talk to an advocate:
Phone: 0808 808 1001
Email: help@nyas.net
www.youngpeople.nyas.net/

Voices from Care

Support for young people in Wales who are, or have been, looked after.
Phone: 02920 451431
Email: info@vfcc.org.uk
www.vfcc.org.uk/



This leaflet has been developed with the help of young people who use Torfaen's Children and Family Services

Thank you to all of you.