

# CHILDRENS GUIDE



*The Concept of this guide for children is to have Titch the mouse as a fostered mouse to support the child in understanding their journey in to fostering.*

*The concept of Titch is that he is a therapeutic mouse who will support the transition for the child from home to placement. He will be used to support a child's introduction prior to placement and in welcoming the child to the fostering family. He will also be used as a therapeutic tool to support through contact, school and health issues.*

*Titch will be used as a therapeutic and tangible tool throughout our agency's ethos.*



**Hi I'm Titch. The Mouse from Ivy House.**

I'm a fostered mouse and I want to answer some of your questions and worries about coming to live with a foster family.

### **Who are Fostering families?**

Fostering families are specially chosen for children who cannot live with their families. Fostering families are ordinary people who care for you and want to share their home with you. They don't want to replace your family.

Children sometimes need to be cared for by foster families for different lengths of time and for different reasons.



Titch wants to tell you about the different types of fostering families that you might live with.

### **Support Fostering Families.**

Support or short break Fostering families will look after you sometimes for days or maybe weeks. They are families that care for lots of different children at different times. Your home will be safe and caring and will make you feel very welcome.

**Short-Term Fostering Families.**

Short-term Fostering families look after children for a short time while their families and social workers make decisions about who can care for them safely. Sometimes this can be for weeks or sometimes longer. Your foster family will do their very best to try to make this a happy time for you.

**Long-Term Fostering Families**

Long-term Fostering families care for children for a long time. This is usually until you have grown up and are ready to move on. If you are going to live with a foster family for a long time, it is important that you feel happy and safe there. You will have time to do things like decorate your bedroom as you like to make it feel more like home for you.



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### **REASONS FOR LIVING WITH AS FOSTER FAMILY.**

- Sometimes children need help because they are having a difficult time at home. They might talk to a teacher a friend a neighbour or call someone for help.
- Sometimes children's families may ask for help because they can't safely care for their children. They might be poorly or finding it hard to look after their children and keep them safe and well.
- Sometimes a friend, neighbour or teacher might contact a social worker because they are worried that a child they know is not safe, not happy or not being looked after properly and they are worried about them.
- Sometimes Social workers will have been visiting your home to see you and your family to help your parents care for you. Your social worker and your family may agree that you need to live with a foster family until decisions are made about who can care for you.
- When you live with fostering families your parents and family will still see the social worker and they will go to court to see the Judge who will decide what they think should happen and who you should live with.
- Sometimes for children this might mean that you live with a foster family until your family are able to look after you again. Or they may decide that you stay in Foster Care until you are 18 years or older.



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## **WHO WILL HELP AND SEE YOU WHEN YOU ARE LIVING WITH YOUR NEW FOSTER FAMILY?**

### **YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WILL HELP AND SEE YOU.**

Your family and friends who are important to you will help you when you move in to your foster family's home. They will meet your fostering family with your social worker to talk all about you. The things you like and don't like to help you feel safe and settle in.

### **YOUR FOSTER FAMILY WILL HELP YOU.**

- They will help you to settle in to the family home. You will have your own bedroom or if your brothers or sisters are with you, you might share with them.
- They will listen to what you say. They want to help you feel happy and well.
- They will help you to keep in touch with your family and friends. They will help you to do well at school and do the best you can. They will help you to enjoy the things you love to do.

### **YOUR SOCIAL WORKER WILL HELP AND SEE YOU.**

- Your own Social Worker works with children and their families in the area that you live in. They are in charge of making sure that you are looked after, safe and happy.

- Your Social worker will visit you and your fostering family. You can talk to them when they visit or telephone / text or email them. Your fostering family will help you to do this. Your Social Workers job is to make sure they listen to you, answer your questions and plan for your future.

### **YOUR IVY HOUSE FOSTERING SOCIAL WORKER**

- You and your fostering family will have your own social worker from the Ivy House Fostering team. We will visit you often and make sure everyone is happy and looked after. We will organize lots of fun things for you and your fostering family to get involved in.
- You can talk to us and we will listen. You can talk to us when we visit or telephone / text or email us. Your fostering family will help you to do this.

### **YOUR INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER. (IRO)**

- When you come to live with a fostering family you will meet your reviewing officer. This is a person who is in charge of making sure your social worker, your family and your fostering family are listening to you, helping you with school, helping you see your friends and family and make sure you are healthy and happy.
- Your reviewing officer will come and see you at your fostering family's home.
- There will be lots of different meetings to talk about how things are going for you. Your parents, teachers, social worker and fostering family will come to the meeting with you if you choose to attend. If you don't want to go to the meetings you can write, draw or talk to someone who can let everyone know what you want.



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### **WHEN YOU ARE WORRIED.**

Titch knows that coming to live with other people and leaving your Family is scary. When he went to live with his Fostering family It helped him to talk to people about his big worries. He talked to his social worker, friends, teacher and fostering family.

**Who can you talk to? Can you write their names or draw their pictures here?**



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**Titch has written you a list of the people who you already know and others that will help you.**

1. Foster carers name and number
2. Social workers name and number
3. Independent Reviewing Officer
4. Ivy House fostering Social worker.
5. Children's rights advocate





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**Titch has some answers to questions you might have about living with your fostering family.**

### **WILL I SEE MY FAMILY?**

- You will hear people talk about having contact, this means keeping in touch with your family. There are different ways to do this. You might visit them, talk to them on the telephone or write to them and send them cards and pictures.

### **WILL I SEE MY FRIENDS?**

- Friends are very important to everyone. Your Social worker and foster family will talk to you about the people that you want to see. We hope that you will also make new friends when living with your Foster Family.

### **WILL I GO TO THE SAME SCHOOL?**

- When children go to live with their foster families they usually stay in the same school. If you are going to live with the Foster family for a long time and the school is far away you may be able to change to a school that is nearer and easier to get to.

### **WILL I HAVE MY OWN BEDROOM?**

- You will have your own bedroom. If you have brothers or sisters who have moved to the fostering family with you, you might share with them. You will never share your bedroom with anyone other than your brothers or sisters.

### **WILL YOU GET THE RIGHT FOSTER FAMILY FOR ME?**

- Your Social Worker Titch the mouse and the team at Ivy House Fostering will make sure that the fostering family they choose for you is the family that can keep you safe and who you will have lots of fun with.

## **WILL I HAVE MY OWN MONEY?**

- You will have regular weekly pocket monies that will be given to you by your foster family. You can spend this money on things you like, or you could save some of it.

## **Will I BE ABLE TO BRING MY OWN STUFF FROM HOME?**

- If there are things that are special to you and you want to bring them, then your fostering family would love you to do this.
- You can draw pictures of things here that are important to you and that you want to bring. You can speak to your Social worker who will arrange with your family to collect the things that are important to you.



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### **WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR FOSTERING FAMILY?**

- They will make you feel welcome and part of the family.
- They will listen and care for you.
- When you feel upset, they will be there to care for you.
- They will celebrate your birthday and special holidays.
- They will help you with school and homework.
- They will make sure you eat the foods you like and help you to try new things.
- They will go with you when you go and see the doctor, dentist or optician.
- They will help you stay in touch with your family and friends.
- They will take you to clubs and do activities you enjoy together.

### **WHAT THEY CAN EXPECT FROM YOU?**

- That you will be happy and have fun with their family.
- That you get involved and try new things.
- That you try your best.
- That you talk to them or someone you trust if you are worried.



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## **YOUR RIGHTS**

**Titch wants to tell you about your rights. These are:**

- You have a right to be listened to and treated fairly all the time even when you have done something that adults are not happy with.
- You have a right to be part of a loving, safe fostering family where you will be able to grow and develop in to your own person.
- You have a right to be valued for the special person you are.
- You have a right to say what you think and to be listened to.
- You have a right to know why you are living with your foster family.
- You have a right to tell people when you are not happy with something. This is called a complaint.

Titch wants to tell you how to make a complaint. You can do this by either talking to your Foster carer, Social worker, Independent reviewing officer or to your Social worker from the Ivy House Team.

There might be someone else who you can talk to who can help you.

If things are going well for you and you want to celebrate this then we would love to know about this to help you celebrate.



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**Here is a list of other people that can help.**

**Ivy House Fostering**

Katie Duffield is the Complaints and Congratulations Manager. You can contact her on: **01909 512168** or email her [katie@ivyhousefostering.co.uk](mailto:katie@ivyhousefostering.co.uk).

**Ivy House Fostering Agency**

The Turbine Business Centre

Coach Close

Shireoaks

Worksop

Nottinghamshire

S8 8AP

**The Children's Commissioner for England** is called Anne Longfield you can contact her at:

**The Office for the Children's Commissioner**

20 Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT.

T: 0207 78 38 330

W:

[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

**Childline**

This is a free 24-hour helpline for children and young people in the UK, ChildLine is confidential and is staffed by counsellors.

T: 0800 1111

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

### **Ofsted**

Ofsted checks the work of fostering agencies in England:

Piccadilly Gate

Store Road

Manchester M1 2WD

### **NSPCC**

The NSPCC will offer help and advice, if you are worried about yourself or someone else the helpline is open 24 hours a day:

T: 0808 0800 500 0

W: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### **Corum Voice**

This is advice for children and young people in care or leaving care:

Corum Voice

Gregory House

Corum Campus

49, Meckleburgh Square

London

WC1N 2QA

T: 0808 800 5792

E: [help@corumvoice.co.uk](mailto:help@corumvoice.co.uk)

W: [www.voiceyp.org](http://www.voiceyp.org)

### **Help at Hand**

Office for the Children's Rights Director

Offer confidential help and advice about being in care, leaving care, living away from home or working with social services. They make sure that your rights are upheld.

E: [help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

T: 0800 528 0731



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**FEEDBACK**

**Titch wants to know if this has helped you settle in to your fostering home.  
Could you answer some questions for Titch, and he will write back to you.**

- Your Name:
- Your Foster Carers name
- Did Titch help you settle in?
- What can Titch do better to help you?
- What did you like about Titch?
- Have you any questions for Titch?