



Fosterline England customer service charter

The Fostering Network is the UK's leading fostering charity, bringing together everyone who is involved in the lives of fostered children to make foster care the very best it can be.

Our vision is a society where the importance of fostering is understood, recognised and supported.

Our mission is to support those who foster, improve opportunities for fostered children and young people and provide expert guidance to all fostering services.

Fosterline England

Fosterline England is a free, independent national advice service that offers support to both current and prospective foster carers in England, providing them with high-quality information, support and signposting about any fostering issue.

- It is accessible via Freephone on 0800 040 7675
- We also provide an email service at enquiries@fosterline.info
- Information, advice and support is available 24/7 at fosterline.info

Fosterline England works to a set of customer service values which include:

- making sure the best interests of the child or young person are paramount
- acknowledging and respecting the diversity and individuality of all people who contact us and providing an inclusive service to all
- making sure all advisers provide information, advice and support in a professional, non-judgemental and impartial manner
- protecting the confidentiality of those who contact us (unless there is a legal reason to breach this confidentiality – please refer to [our confidentiality policy](#))
- taking our data protection responsibilities seriously and abiding by data protection legislation ([please refer to our data protection policy](#))
- taking our responsibilities of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults seriously
- valuing the health and wellbeing of Fosterline advisers
- being open to and learning from any feedback about the service we are providing.

Our Fosterline England customer service charter sets out our commitment to you, and includes:

- Providing a responsive and reliable service using experienced, skilled and knowledgeable Advisers with excellent customer service at the core of their work.
- Treating our service users with respect, compassion, kindness and professionalism.
- Ensuring there are inclusive methods of communication for those users where English is not their first language, who may be hard of hearing or have any other communication difficulties.
- Ensuring that we do not discriminate on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy which must be held in the highest regard.
- Respecting the confidential nature of the service and your right to confidentiality* in all communication between you and the service (*other than in situations where confidentiality may legally have to be breached).
- Aiming for a same or next working day response to enquiries.
- Ensuring we have a positive and receptive attitude to user feedback about the service and make it as easy as possible for a person to provide feedback.
- Publicising our opening times and availability of services openly.
- Ensuring enquiries are recorded on our secure database in line with our data protection responsibilities.
- Signposting enquirers to other organisations for further information, advice and support where appropriate.

By telephone:

- We provide a Freephone telephone number for callers to access our service.
- We aim to respond to all calls within the same day, or the next working day.
- We provide an answerphone facility outside of business hours, providing people with clear signposting to additional, 24/7 services.
- We aim to answer all telephone calls within one minute, and when answering, will identify ourselves clearly.
- We will aim to advise or signpost you as quickly as possible or will take your details and ask someone to call you back.
- When returning a call, we will introduce ourselves as being from Fosterline England and make sure it is convenient to talk.
- When returning a call, if we are unable to reach you, we will leave a voicemail wherever possible.

By email:

- We will aim to respond to email enquiries to our general Fosterline England address within the same day, or the next working day.
- If you email us, you will receive an automated response letting you know of our intention to respond and giving you additional ways to reach us if you need a faster response.

- Our email responses will always include the contact details for Fosterline should you need to contact us again.

Safeguarding:

Fosterline England is a strictly confidential service. The only time when we may have to breach confidentiality is if we are told/provided with information where a child or young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm. This will be treated as a safeguarding concern.

We will always let you know if we believe your interaction with us poses a safeguarding concern.

We will always let you know if we need to breach confidentiality (please refer to [our confidentiality policy](#)).

We will always follow our safeguarding policy.

Compliments, suggestions and complaints:

We will follow and adhere to our [compliments, suggestions and complaints procedure](#).

Obtaining your feedback:

We are committed to providing the best possible service to everyone involved in fostering and making Fosterline England service the best it can possibly be. We may ask callers to complete an anonymous survey following an interaction with us. The answers that you give in this survey will be used to help us understand what our helplines are doing well and what we can do better.

Your responses will be held in confidence.

We will only use them for the purposes described above and unauthorised third parties will not be allowed to access them. We will not use your name in anything we publish, or share based on these survey findings.

Subject Access Requests:

We will deal with any subject access request in line with [our data protection policy](#).

The Data Protection Officer will be responsible for ensuring that subject access requests are handled within the legal time limit of 40 days.

Translation and interpretation:

If English is not your first language and you need help when communicating with Fosterline service, we use the Language Line interpretation service.

If you have hearing or speech difficulties, we use the Relay UK service.

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