



Children's Guide to Fostering

Ages 12-18



Bright Start, Bright Futures

**This Booklet has been designed
with the help of Foster Children, who are in care.**

.....

Keep it safe.

You May need to look at it from time to time

Name:

Age: **My birthday is on:**

My foster carers name is:

**This booklet has been designed with the help of foster
children, currently in care.**

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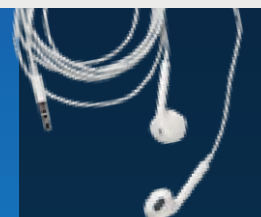
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Welcome

This booklet is designed to help you understand what fostering is about and answer some of the questions you might have. It will tell you all about living with a foster family and help you understand what fostering aims to do for you. You will be staying with foster carers, who are registered with Connect Fostering Services.



Your social worker will talk to you about why you are living here and help make plans for your future. We want you to be safe, happy and be able to try new things.

This booklet is yours to keep and to use, whenever you want to find something out.





My Important Contact Details

You can ask your foster carer to help you fill this booklet.

Name:

I live at

.....

My foster carers are called:

Telephone:

Connect Fostering Social Worker is called:

My social worker is called:

Telephone:

My Optician is:

Telephone:

My IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) is called:

.....

Telephone:

Email:

I go to school at

My doctor is:

Telephone:

My dentist is:

Telephone:

My likes and dislikes questionnaire

My favourite food is:

my favourite films are:

My Favourite Music Artist/band is:

my favourite game is:

my favourite subjects are:

I'm Allergic to?:

Tell us something we don't know about you:

.....

.....

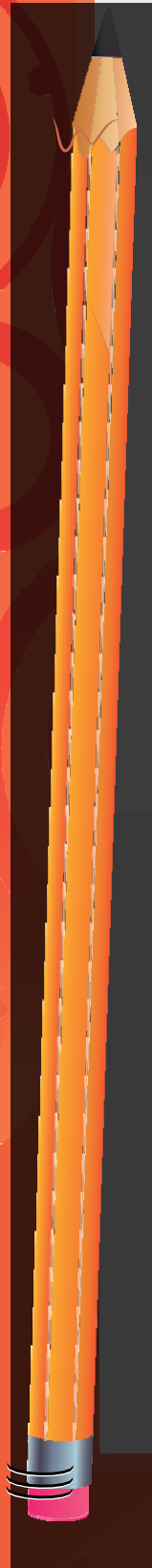
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**You may want to share this with your Foster Carer
to help them get to know you better.**



Section 1

Who are Connect Fostering Services?

Connect Fostering Services provide Foster carers to look after children who cannot be with their family. Connect Fostering Services train and support foster carers to look after children and young people.

Your foster carer is registered with Connect Fostering Services.

Why are there two social workers?

There are two social workers:

You will have your own social worker, who will visit you and the foster carer. A social worker is someone who is trained to help children and families through difficult times. They will explain things to you and help you to understand what is going on. Your social worker and Connect Fostering social worker will work together to make sure you are safe, settled and well whilst living with the foster carer.

Your foster carers have their own supervising social worker from Connect Fostering Services. Their job is to make sure your carers are looking after you properly and have all the help they need. They will also talk to you to find out if you are happy and being well cared for. Connect Fostering Services train and support foster carers and visit them regularly. We want all of our foster carers to be kind and helpful to you, to treat you with respect and fairness.

If you want to see your own social worker more often, ask our social worker to pass this onto your social worker.



Remember: We are all here to help you!

- A social worker from Connect Fostering Services will visit you and your foster carer to find out how things are working out for you.
- Your social worker will also visit you to get your views about your foster carers and how things are going.
- We regularly visit our foster carers to make sure that everyone is treating everyone fairly and with respect. We want our foster carers to be kind and helpful to children and young people. Our foster carers will offer you support and guidance. They will listen to you but they may not always agree with your views. If they don't agree with your views they will explain why they do not agree with your views.

We understand that this can be a very difficult time for you and that we all react to change in different ways. You may be feeling upset, angry, confused or relieved. These feelings are not unusual but it often helps to talk about how you are feeling. Your foster carer will be there if you ever want to talk. We want you to settle and to feel safe and secure. We want you to be able to express your views freely, but always remember that your carer has to ensure that you are safe and will have some rules for your safety.

Connect Fostering Services' aim:

'To provide well managed and high quality foster care placements to children and young people in a fostering setting'

(Connect Fostering Services' Statement of purpose)



Section 2

Being in Care



Your foster carer/s are:

.....

Other people living in or regularly visiting the house:

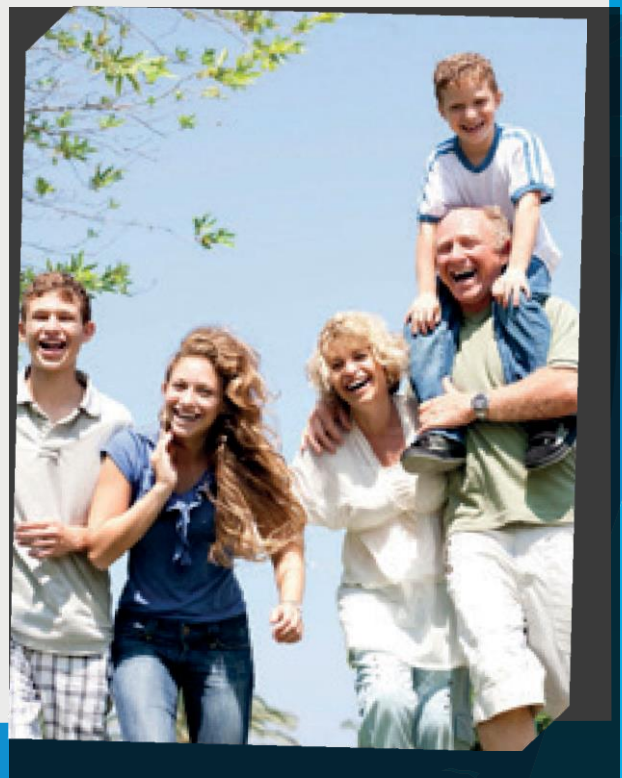
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Are there any pets?: Yes No

If Yes what are they and what are their names?:

.....

Fostering means going to live with a foster family when you cannot live with your mum and dad. Sometimes this is called "going into care" or being "looked after". There can be many reasons why children are fostered.

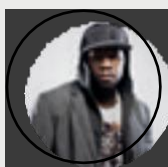


Why are young people fostered?

Young People come into care for a number of reasons. A child may ask for help as they are having a difficult time at home. Sometimes parents themselves may ask for help. This can be for a number of reasons such as they may be ill and can't cope. Or it may be because they know they are hurting their child and want to stop and need help.

Sometimes other people will tell a social worker, that they are worried about a young person and they are not being looked after properly at home. Social workers may visit the family home and move the young person away to make sure that they are kept safe and well. Sometimes the social worker will have to go to court and ask the judge to make an 'order' for the young person to be looked after by the local council.

Did you know, the following famous people were fostered / adopted?



50 Cent

The hip-hop mogul revealed in 2011 that he was adopted by his grandparents after his mother passed away.



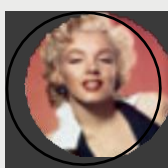
Jamie Foxx

Actor Jamie Foxx, who starred in Django Unchained, was raised by his grandparents, who adopted him when he was 7 months old.



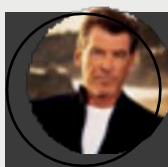
Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela's father passed away when the future diplomat was just 9-years-old and, as a result, he was adopted by Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo.



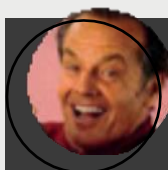
Marilyn Monroe

Marilyn Monroe was placed in 11 different foster homes as a child, after her mother was institutionalised. She also spent almost a year in the Children's Aid Society Orphanage in Los Angeles.



James Bond (Pierce Brosnan)

When Pierce Brosnan's father left his mother, she decided to go to nursing school and gain a qualification which would help her care for her son. In the meantime, the actor was placed in the various care of friends and family.



Jack Nicholson

Jack Nicholson was a grown man when he discovered the woman he thought was his sister was actually his mother, and the woman he knew as his mother was his grandmother.

Inspiring Quotes from foster children about foster care

' How does it feel to be a Foster Child? It's like being in a great world of your own '

Mark, Age 12 (internet source)

' We should all make our foster care family a possibility. '

MeMe, Age 17 (Internet source)

' The best advice I have from one foster child to another is that you never give up....Never think that you are worthless. '

Jane, Age 10 (Internet Source)

Who are foster carers?

Foster carers are adults who look after children, who need somewhere else to live for a while. You will stay in their home and they will look after you.

- Foster carers look after children in their own home.
- They provide children with a safe and comfortable home environment and you will have your own bedroom.
- Foster carers provide food, clothing and pocket money.
- If you are not feeling well, your carer will take care of you, they may call a doctor or get you emergency medical help.
- Foster carers help children with their homework, attend school meetings and events. They work closely with the school and ensure that you attend school regularly and receive the necessary support.

Foster carers are trained to listen to you about any worries that you may have.

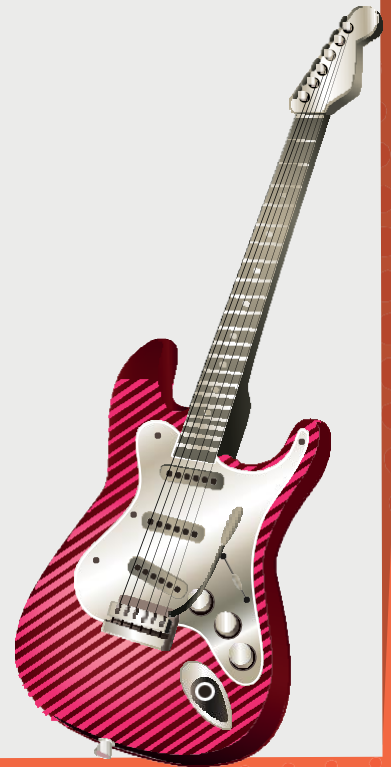
- Foster carers will arrange activities for you e.g. swimming, football, cinema, visiting the library, shopping, going to the park, photography etc. depending on your interest.
- Foster carers are willing to talk to you about any worries you may have.
- Foster carers may take you on holiday with them.

Your foster carer will also:

- Make sure you are well looked after
- Try and make you feel like part of the family.
- Listen to you and try to help you when you feel sad or unhappy.
- Help you to learn new things.

they will also make sure you have:

- A bedroom of your own
- Somewhere to put your clothes and belongings.
- A place where you can meet your social worker when they visit.
- A choice to celebrate your birthday and religious festivals

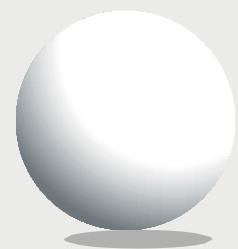


Are there Rules in the house?

Each foster home is different. Foster carers will tell children what the rules of the house are so that you are aware of what you can and cannot do in the home. These rules will help you to make sure you are kept healthy and safe.

Foster carers want you to:

- Show respect to people
- Join in the family meals and activities
- Attend school regularly
- Stick to family rules
- Share your views



No smacking policy

Our foster carers have agreed that they will not give unfair punishments to children and will not smack or hit children in their care.

Culture and background

We try to place children with foster carers, who have the same culture, religion, and language as you do. If this is not possible, then we will try and support you to experience your culture, customs, festivals, and religious practices that you are used to.

Questions and Answers

How long will I be in foster care?

The length of time you are in foster care will depend on your situation. You may stay for a short period like a few months or it may be much longer. Your social worker will advise you about how long you are likely to be in foster care.

What about my family, will I see them again?

Your foster carer and social worker will help you to see your family and friends. The word 'contact' is used when social workers talk about children and young people keeping in touch with their families.

If this is not possible you will be told why you cannot see them. Your wishes and feelings will be listened to about meeting your family. If there are other people important to you and you would like to see them or talk to them on the phone, then let either your social worker or Connect Fostering Services social worker know.



What about my education?

When you come into care, your social worker will try and ensure that you do not have to change school. If, however, that's not possible, then your social worker and foster carer, will seek your views about choosing a new school for you'.

Your teachers will be told that you are living with a foster family, they will arrange special meetings at school, called a PEP (Personal Education Plan). The purpose of these meetings are to monitor the progress of your education,

to see how you are getting on at school and to identify any additional help and support, in order for you to achieve your full potential. The meetings will be chaired by someone from your school and will involve you, your foster carer(s) and Connect's social worker and possibly your parents.

This PEP plan will include your current grades, exam results, future targets and details of any additional support you need to make sure you meet the targets.

Section 3 Meetings



Care Plan

Every child who is being looked after by the local authority has a care plan. The foster child, the parents and the professional involved in producing the care plan. The care plan includes everything that is important to you, such as:

- Information about why you are in care
- Any services to be provided for you, including any special arrangements to meet any religious, linguistic, racial or cultural needs
- Your health needs
- Your education needs
- How often you can see your family
- How long you will remain in care
- Your hobbies and Interests that you enjoy

The care plan should be clear and easy to understand, and is reviewed regularly. You should also be given copies of the plan.

Meetings

A number of different meetings will take place, which will involve you, your social worker and foster carer. Some of these are called Looked After Review (LAC) meetings. These meetings are held regularly to ensure that your needs are being met according to the care plan. The first meeting will take place within 20 working days of you being placed with your foster carer. The next one will be after 3 months, and then at a 6 monthly interval. The LAC reviews are chaired by someone who is called an Independent Review Officer (IRO). Some children, whose first language might not be English, may need the help of an interpreter to take part in their review. Others might want an advocate to help speak up for them.

The LAC review brings together those people who are closely involved in your care. It is an opportunity to:

- Review your care plan
- Discuss your progress in care
- Make Plans for your future
- Promote your wishes and feelings

What is an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and how can I contact them?

An IRO is an experienced social worker, who works independently of children's services. You will be allocated an IRO, when you first come into care. The role of the IRO is to ensure that you are being well looked after and that the local authority and foster carers are meeting all your needs. The IRO will also make sure they know how you are feeling and what you would want to happen. They will do this by talking to you in private before the review meetings. You may be also asked to complete a short questionnaire about your wishes and feelings.

You can contact your IRO at any time, not just around the time of your review if you have any questions or worries about your care plan. Your social worker, foster carer or Connect Fostering Services social worker can provide you information on how you can contact them. You can also take your IRO's contact details card when you meet him/her at your first review.

Section 4 KEEPING SAFE

Bullying

Bullying includes such things as: threats, name calling, pinching, hitting, pulling hair or other types of physical intimidation or action which deliberately upsets you. If you feel that you are being bullied at school, you can talk to your foster carer or teacher.

You can always phone or talk to your social worker about school or life in your foster home.

They can be supportive and sensitive and there are other agencies that might be able to help or you can call Childline on: 0800 111

Report Online Abuse

How to report concerns

If someone you are talking to online does or says something that makes you feel upset, worried or uncomfortable, if someone is asking you to do things that you don't want to, or if you see something that you don't like, then you need to do something about it.

If this happens, you must remember that it's not your fault.

- Always tell an adult – this might be a parent or carer, a teacher, a youth worker or another adult that you feel you can trust.
- Save any messages that have upset you so that you can show the person who you tell. They should be able to give you advice about what to do. Don't worry about being in trouble – you are not the one who has done anything wrong
- If you don't feel that you can tell an adult that you know, then there are other people that can help you.

For further information, advice and support visit the Governments CEOPS website (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) where there are lots of useful information for you, and provides you with a way to report what is happening to you. The link is www.ceop.police.uk

In an emergency, you can dial 999 and ask for the police.

You should only call 999 in an emergency, for example, if you are in immediate danger and need help straight away because someone is hurting you, or going to hurt you.

KEEPING SAFE

Child Sexual Exploitation

What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

Sexual exploitation can be hard to recognise because you often believe you're in a good relationship with the person – or people – who want to abuse your trust in them.

It could be a friend, or group of friends. It could be someone you think of as a boyfriend or girlfriend. It could be a person or a new group of people you've only just got to know. It could be someone you've talked to online. But whoever it is, they could use clever ways to take advantage of your relationship – and that means you can be harmed almost before you know what's going on. For example, someone might give you money, drugs, alcohol, gifts or somewhere to stay and then force you to do one or more of these things in return:

- Have sex with them
- Do something sexual to them
- Be touched inappropriately, in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable
- Look at sexual images – including films or pictures
- Watch them do something sexual, including having sex or touching themselves sexually.

That's why it's so important to look out for the warning signs that someone's behaviour towards you may not be all it seems (Bernardos).

If you are worried about a situation that you or a friend is in, talk to an adult that you trust as soon as you can. People who can help you include teachers, parents, carers and social workers.

If you, or a friend, are in immediate danger or want urgent help, call 999 or contact your local police.

Section 4 My rights as a child in Foster Care

My Rights as a Child in Foster Care...

It's my right to be safe, secure and protected

It's my right to receive special help if I have a disability

It's my right to have access to a Children's Rights Officer

It's my right to have information, advice support with my healthcare and

It's my right to enjoy my religion and culture

It's my right to have my views to be heard and taken into account

It's my right to have access to an Advocate

Independent Visitors

When you live with a Foster Carer, you are entitled to an Independent visitor. Independent visitors do not work for the local authority or Connect Fostering Services they are volunteers who want to help and support a young person in care.

Your social worker may ask you or you may request an independent visitor.

An independent visitor role is to:

- Visit you
- Listen to you and encourage to succeed in all aspects of your life
- Support you and have fun.
- Or just someone who you can talk to about things.

An Advocate

An advocate is someone who will help you get your views heard. They do not work for the local authority. Advocates can support you:

- In review meetings or other meetings where decisions are being made
- If you are unhappy with any aspects of your care or if you don't agree with your care plan
- If you want to make a formal complaint

If you would like an Advocate, speak to your social worker

A Children's Rights Officer

A Children's Right Officer is independent from social workers, foster carers and all other adults concerned with the care of children and young people. A Children's Right Officer can also be contacted if you do not feel listened to. You can ask your social worker to help you contact them from your local area. The nominated officer would then make arrangements to visit and speak to you and follow up with subsequent actions.

Section 5 Comments and Complaints

Speak up and Speak Out!

Complaint

Living in foster care isn't always easy, but it is important to remember there are lots of people who want to make sure you are happy and well looked after. If you are unhappy in your foster home, or about anything that is happening to you, you need to tell someone you trust.

You can talk to:

- Your Foster Carer
- Your social worker and your foster carers social worker
- A teacher
- The fostering manager at Connect Fostering Services
- Your IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer)

If your complaint is about the foster carer you can contact the manager at Connect Fostering Services who will try and sort out the problem at any time:

You can write to us at:

Connect Fostering Services Ltd, Connect House,
The Stables, Parsonage Farm, Hollow Hill LN,
SL0 0JW

Or telephone us anytime on

Tel: 0203 780 3333 / 0203 371 2290 / 0203 371 9192

Or you can complete a complaints card (see at back)



Comment

Tell us your ideas on how we could make our services better:

Compliments

Tell us if you are happy with a service, foster carer or social worker.

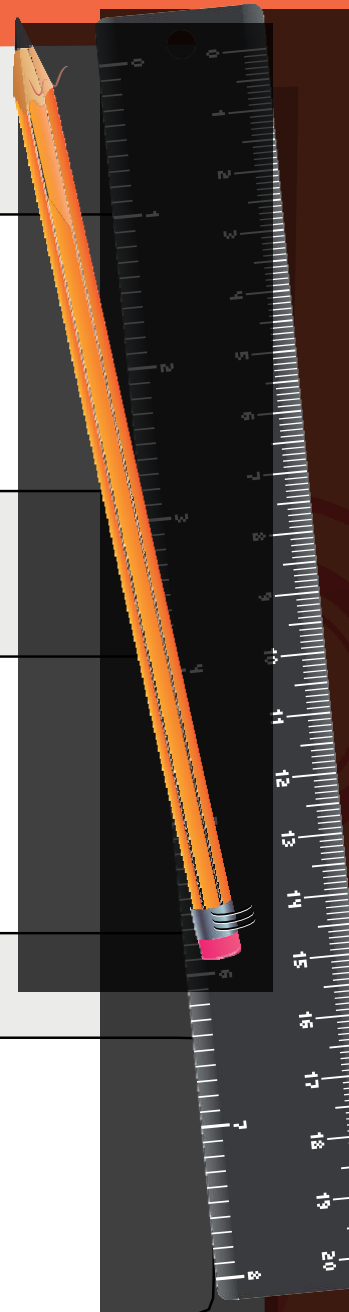
What happens next?

When we receive your comments or complaints, we will write back to you and let you know that we have received it. We will also give you the name of the person who is going to deal with your complaint and let you know how long it will take. Once your complaint has been answered, we will contact you again to see if you are happy with the outcome. If you don't think your complaint has been sorted, we will let you know, what to do next.

We promise to:

- Take your complaint seriously
- Deal with it promptly
- Keep you informed of the progress, until it has been resolved
- Try to find out what went wrong and why
- Advise you of your rights to appeal

Remember you have a right to make a complaint, you won't get into any trouble, if you make a complaint.



If you're unhappy...

Did you know there are lots of other people who you can contact if you are not happy.

These include:

Coram Voice

Phone: 0808 800 5792 (calls are free)
Coram Voice is a national charity that works with young people to speak up for them and support them in getting improvements to their lives.

Ofsted

Address: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,
Manchester, M1 2WD
Phone: 0300 123 1231
EMAIL: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
OFSTED makes sure fostering agencies like Connect Fostering Services are doing their job properly and looking after children placed with foster carers. The people who answer your call will listen to your problems and can check out what we are doing.

Children's Commissioner for England

Address: Sanctuary Buildings,
20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT
Phone number: 0800 528 0731
Email address:
help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Childline

Phone: 0800 1111 (its free to call)
You can contact Childline about anything.
No problem is too big or too small.
Whatever your worries, it's better out than in.

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Phone number: 0808 808 1001
Email address: help@nyas.net

NSPCC: Child Protection Line

Address: Weston House 42 Curtain Road
London EC2A 3NH
Phone Number: Free phone 0800 800 5000

Voice For the Child in Care

Address: 320 City Road,
London EC1V 2NZ
Phone Number: 020 7833 5792



Remove Me

Remove this card and keep this safe.
This has all the important contact numbers that you may need if you are unhappy.



This space is for you to write anything you want

Tell Us What You Think

We would love to have your feedback

1. I have read this guide? (please tick) Yes No
2. Did you find this guide useful? Yes No
3. Do you know who you can contact if you are unhappy and want to complain?
 Yes No
4. Is there anything we have missed? That you think we could add to improve and make this guide better?

5. Do you have any questions?

Thank you for your feedback!



You can ask your social worker, teacher, foster carers to help you fill out this form. Please give your completed form to your Connect Fostering Services Social Worker. Your comments will be dealt with immediately and you will receive feedback on what actions we take.

If you have a Comment, Compliment or Complaint we would like to hear from you. Please ask your foster carers to cut these out.

My Name is: Age:

My Address is:

My Phone Number is:

My comment is:



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My comment is:

English

Information from this document can be made available in alternative formats and in different Languages. If you require any further assistance, please contact us on the details below.

Spanish

La información de este documento puede estar disponible en alternative formatos y en diferentes idiomas. Si necesita más ayuda, por favor póngase en contacto con nosotros en el formulario.

Gujarati

આ દસ્તાવેજમાં પાસેથી માહિતી વૈકલ્પિક અંધારણોમાં અને ઉપલબ્ધ બુનાવી શકાય છે વિવિધ ભાષા. તમારે આગળ કોઈ સહાયતાની જરૂર હોય, તો તેના પર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો નીચે વિગતો આપે છે.

Bengali

এই নথি থেকে তথ্য বিকল্প উপলব্ধ করা যেতে পারে বিন্যাস ও বিভিন্ন ভাষার মধ্যে. আপনি কোন সহায়তা প্রয়োজন হয়, নিচে বিস্তারিত আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন.

Chinese

從這個文檔信息可在備選可用 格式和不同的語言。如果您需要任何進一步的援助，請與我們聯繫下面的細節。



Connect Fostering Services Ltd
Connect House, The Stables,
Parsonage Farm, Hollow Hil LN,
SL0 0JW

Tel: 0203 780 3333 / 0203 371 2290 / 0203 371 9192