



Department
for Education

Updating foster care standards and guidance

**Seeking the views of children and young
people**

Launch date: 8 July 2026

Respond by: 16 September 2026

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Introduction

What is this document

Fostering services are organisations which choose and support foster carers and help children in care. These services have to follow the law. They also have to pay attention to rules the Department for Education makes which explain how the department expect them to do things. Experts come to check how well they are following doing this.

We have written new rules for these organisations and would like to get people's views on them.

What is the problem

We want every child to have a safe and loving home where they can grow up and do well.

For a long time, the rules that explain how we expect fostering services to do things have not been clear. They were written in 2011, are complicated to use, and they do not focus enough on what children need.

This can make it harder for foster carers to provide the care and support that children need.

What we want to do to fix it

We have created new rules for fostering services that are easier to understand and focus on helping children.

These new rules will:

- focus on what children need
- help adults know what to do
- be short and easy to read

What matters most

Children have told us that the most important thing is having an adult they trust who:

- knows them
- cares about them
- stays in their life

The new rules for fostering services will help build strong relationships, which help children feel safe and happy.

We also want children to stay with people they know and trust when it is safe to do so. This might include with family members or other people they know well.

Who helped us

We worked with a group of people to write the new rules for fostering services.

These people include:

- adults who work with children and families
- foster carers
- people who have been in care themselves

Working with these people was important. It means the new rules are based on lots of real-life experiences and what children need most.

Your views matter

We have written some rules. To help us get the new rules right, we are asking what people think about them before we replace the old rules.

Your views can help us make the rules better and make children's lives better.

You can share what you think with us anytime between 8 July 2026 and 16 September 2026.

We will also run sessions where children and young people can share their ideas and talk about what matters to them.

Who this document is for

- Children and young people with lived experience of care and / or fostering.

Information sharing and support

We want everyone taking part in this consultation to feel safe and supported. You don't need to tell us your name or anything that would help us work out who you are – so you can be really honest about how you feel or anything you've gone through.

We know that some things we ask about may be upsetting or bring back bad memories or feelings. If anything feels upsetting, or answering the questions is too much for you, please know that help is out there. Please make sure you speak to an adult you trust or someone in the list here, who can help you if you need it:

- [Childline | Free counselling service for kids and young people](#)
- [The Mix](#)
- [Mental Health Support For Young People | YoungMinds](#)
- [Useful contacts for support - for 11-18 year olds | Mind](#)

Taking part is completely your choice, and you can stop at any time.

How to share your views

The easiest way to share your answers is online. You can do this on [DfE consultations on GOV.UK](#).

Other ways to share your views

If you cannot use the online form, you can send your answers to the questions to us via email or post.

Email

standards.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk

Post

Fostering Placement Market Reform

Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Start date

The consultation opened on 8 July 2026.

End date

The consultation closes on 16 September 2026 at 11.59pm. We will not be able to look at responses submitted after this time.

Questions

If you have a question about the new rules, you can contact the fostering policy team on standards.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk.

If you have a question about using the website to respond, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: coordinator.consultations@education.gov.uk, telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies of the documents can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

What happens next?

We will read all the answers carefully and use them to make the rules better.

The final version of the rules will be shared on [GOV.UK](#) later in 2026. Fostering services will have to start using these rules when this happens.

Keeping your information safe

We will keep your information safe. Your answers will not be shared with anyone outside of the Department for Education.

Your answers will be looked at by people, and we may use computer tools like Artificial Intelligence (AI), to help us sort and understand them better.

Decisions about the new rules will always be made by people.

Questions on the new rules

We want to know what you think about the new fostering rules – you can find them [here](#).

You can answer as many or as few questions as you like. There are no right or wrong answers.

Question 1 is about you and can only be answered through the [online form](#).

2. Overall, what do you think about the new rules?

Please choose one: I like them a lot; I like some parts; I'm not sure; I don't like some parts; I don't like them.

3. What do you like about the new rules? **[Free text]**

4. Are the rules easy to understand?

Please choose one: Yes; A bit; No; I'm not sure.

If not, what parts of the rules were hard to understand? **[Free text]**

5. Is there anything you think should be different in the new rules? **[Free text]**

6. Is there anything you think is missing or should be added that is not in the rules now?
[Free text]

7. Do you think these rules would help children feel safe, cared for, and supported?

Please choose one: Yes; A bit; No; I'm not sure.

Why do you think this? **[Free text]**

8. What is the most important thing the rules should get right for children in foster care?
[Free text]



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