



Youth Mentoring Service: Information for
Foster Carers



What is the Youth Mentoring Service?

The service provides unpaid volunteer mentors for children and young people who are living in the care of North Somerset Council. Your foster child would sign up for the service voluntarily.

What is a mentor?

The dictionary defines a mentor as a “wise and trusted guide and advisor”.

What are the aims of the Mentoring Service?

- To increase the young person’s self-esteem, confidence and sense of well being;
- To support the young person’s educational aspirations and achievements;
- To nurture the young person’s development of life skills;
- To promote the young person’s resilience and independence.

Isn’t that my role, as a foster carer?

Yes. The mentoring service aims to compliment the work carried out by all parties involved in the young person’s life, including social workers, schools and foster carers.

Who are the mentors?

Mentors are adults from all walks of life within the North Somerset area. They are unpaid volunteers. They are CRB checked and go through a selection process which includes interviews and training prior to being matched with the young person. Mentors are required to attend supervision meetings at regular intervals.





What happens during a mentoring session?

Initially the mentor takes the young person out once a week for a couple of hours to do a leisure activity like bowling or going for a walk. This enables them to get to know one another and to build rapport. Once they feel comfortable together, the young person begins to identify goals with the help of the mentor. The mentor and mentee keep track of progress.

What do you mean by goals?

These will be unique to each young person, but they may include things like how to deal with conflict, how to manage their social life and school work or how to feel more confident in speaking with adults.

What if my foster child talks negatively about me to their mentor?

It is quite likely that a young person will tell the mentor about any problems they are facing in their foster family. If this happens, the mentor will discuss the issues with the young person, in order to help them to find strategies for dealing with their difficulties. The mentor will not make a judgement on you, or the young person.

How will I know what has been discussed?

What the mentee discusses with the mentor is confidential between them. You should not ask the mentor or mentee what has been discussed, but you can trust that the mentor will deal with any criticism that they hear in a constructive way. The mentor may tell you relevant information if the young person has agreed to them doing this. As with any adult working with young



people, mentors have a duty to report any concerns that they feel may adversely affect the welfare of the young person or be a child protection issue.

What if I have 'grounded' my foster child?

The mentoring service supports the young person through difficult times in their life. Mentors help their mentees to reflect upon their difficulties and to find positive ways forward. The service should not be seen as a privilege, but as a progressing piece of work designed to help the young person to develop better life skills. In the same way that you would not stop a child from attending school, the young person should not be prevented from attending their mentoring session.

How will I communicate with the mentor?

This is for you and the mentor to discuss. When the young person applies to the mentoring service, a meeting will be set up between you, your foster child and the mentor so that you can discuss your expectations.

How do I get further information?

Please contact the mentoring coordinator at the following address:

The Resource Service, 12 Clifton Road
Weston-super-Mare BS23 1BL
Tel: **01934 421 900**

Council documents can be made available in large print, audio, easy read and other formats. Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

For more information contact: 01934 421 900
or kate.hatherell@n-somerset.gov.uk