

Special Guardianship Orders

Children's Guide



Your Guide to Special Guardianship Orders

This book belongs to ...

.....

Can you draw a picture of yourself here!



Important things about you!

Ask a grown up you are living with to help you write down the things that are important to you

What school do you go to?

What is your favourite subject at school?

Who is your favourite teacher?



What are your favourite foods?



What is your favourite drink?

What things do you like to do when you are not at school?



Do you have a favourite song?



Do you have a favourite toy?

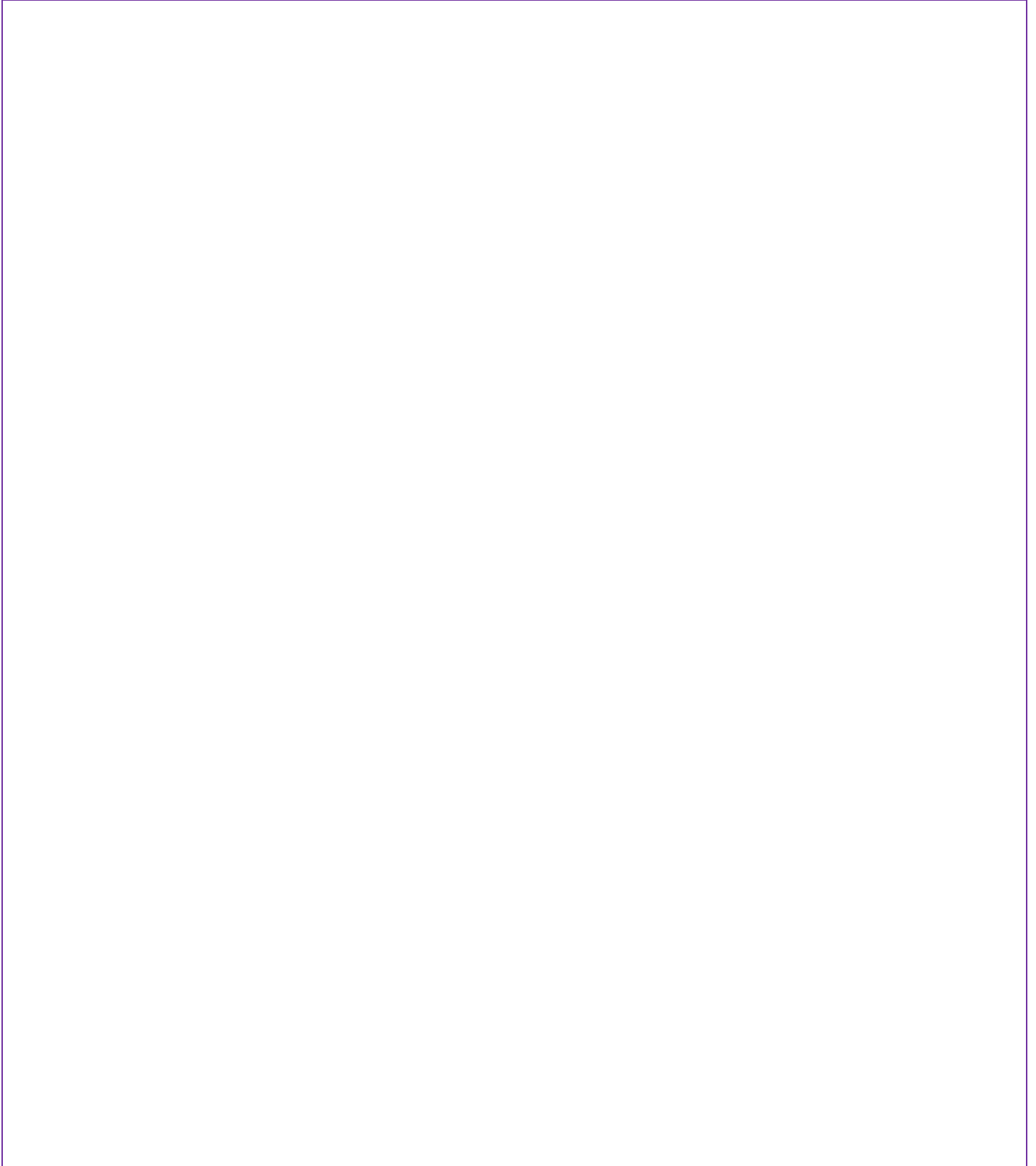


Things that you dislike or make you sad?



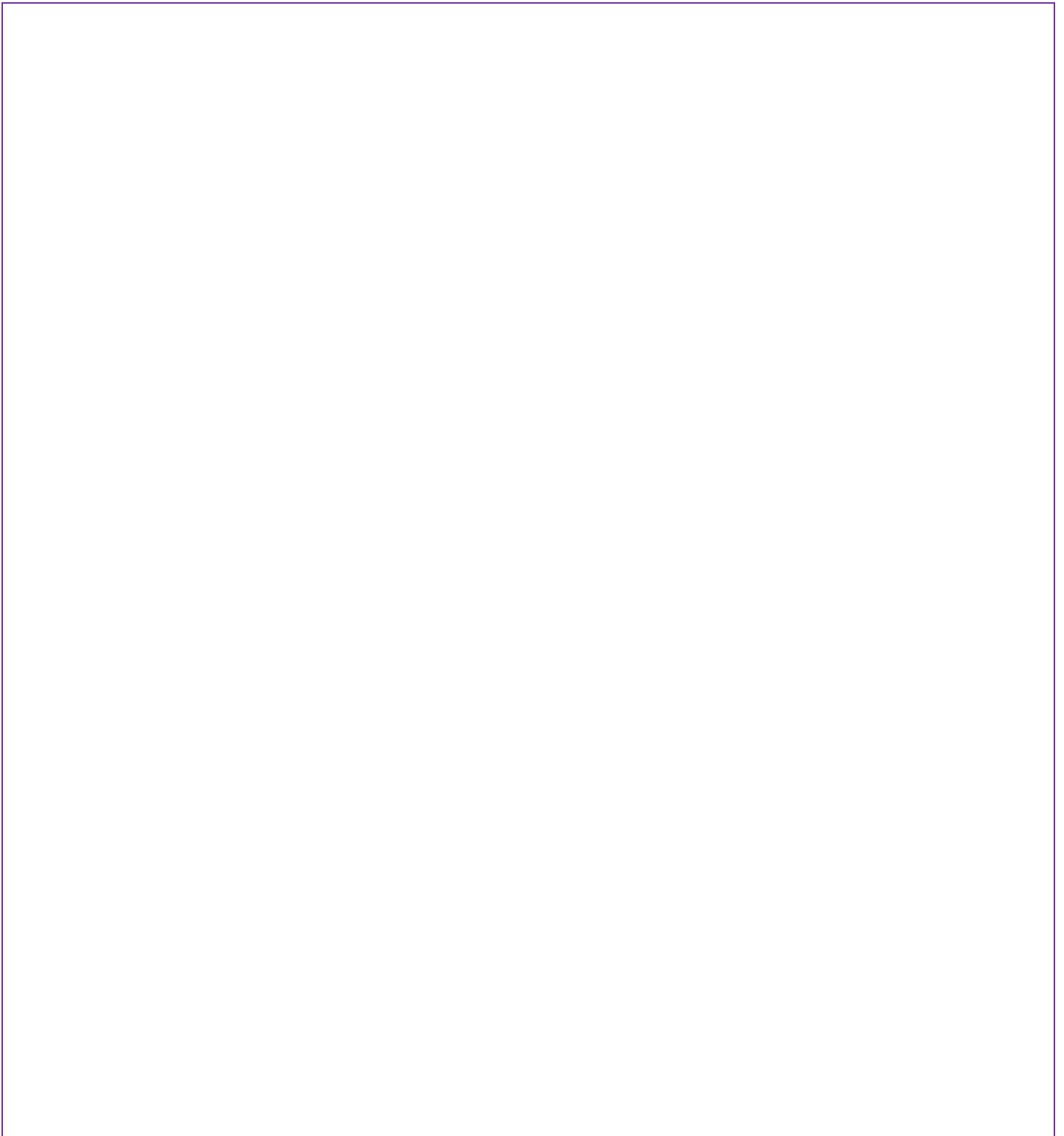
About the place you are living at now?

Draw a picture of the house you are living in now and who lives with you.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin purple border, intended for a child to draw a picture of their current living situation and the people who live with them.

People in your family

Ask the grown-up looking after you to help you write down / draw all the people in your family.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin purple border, intended for the user to draw or write about the people in their family.

Why some children do not live with their parents

Parents have to make sure that their children have enough to eat and that there is the right kind of food for children to grow strong and healthy and that children are kept warm enough and are wearing the right clothes for the weather.

When a baby is born parents have to make sure their baby has a clean warm bed to sleep in and that the baby is not left in dirty nappies. They need to make sure the baby is washed regularly and has clean clothes to wear.



Children need to have a lot of cuddles and spend time playing with their mum or dad. These things help make a child feel loved and secure.

Parents also need to make sure that their children have enough toys, books and other things to play with. Children also need time to play with other children to help them learn new things.



Parents have to make sure that their children are healthy by taking them to the doctors so that they don't get poorly and make sure they are seen by the dentist regularly.

When a child is old enough to go to school parents have the important job of making sure their children go to school on time every day and give them lots of help at home to help with counting, numbers, reading and writing.



Parents have a big responsibility to protect their children from any kind of harm so they don't get hurt and to keep them safe.

All of these things mean that parents have a lot to do and for some parents it is very hard to make sure everything is done, even though they love their children. When parents cannot do all these things for their children and keep them safe, children may need to live with different people like a family member or foster carers who will love and look after them and make sure all of the things they need are done to keep them safe and well.

If you are confused or upset about why you are not living with your parents, you can talk to the grown up you are living with.

Your Space to write down why you cannot live with your parents? You can use words and pictures to say what has happened to you.



How it makes you feel not living with your parents?

Children all have their own feelings about things and not all children feel the same about living away from their parents.

Some children don't know how they feel and are all mixed up which makes their tummy feel all wobbly. Or, their head hurts because they are thinking about it so much.

Some children can say exactly how they feel.

Here are some of the things that children might feel:



Sad because they miss their parents.



Scared because they got hurt when living with their parents and they don't want to get hurt again.



Worried because they know their parents don't look after themselves properly.



Confused because they are not sure what is going to happen to them.



Happy because they finally don't have to worry about food and they have clean clothes to wear to school. Or, happy because they are safe and they no longer have to look after themselves and / or their brothers and sisters.



Excited because they are doing things they have not done before



Guilty because they feel happy and excited.



Angry because they want to go home to live with their parents.

That's a lot of different feelings and no wonder it can feel really hard sometimes.

Some children find it ok to talk about how they are feeling. Some children find it more difficult. It's really important though that grown-ups help children find a way to let people know if they are finding it hard.

You could ask the grown-up you are living with to help you work out the best way for you to tell people if you are finding it really hard? You don't always have to 'talk' when you are finding it hard. Some children like to draw pictures or write about their feelings if talking is too hard.

Here is some space if you want to write or draw...

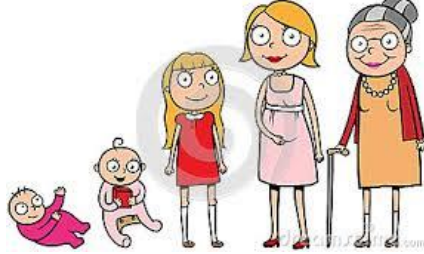


What is going to happen next?

All about Special Guardianship Orders

What is a Special Guardian?

Special Guardians are grown-ups (they are 18 years old or over) who care for children in their home until they are all grown up themselves.



If you cannot live with your parents, you might already be living with someone who wants to be your Special Guardian. This could be someone you already knew when you were living with your parents, like a family friend or family member. Or, maybe it could be a foster carer who you met when you could no longer live with your parents.

You might not have met the person who wants to take care of you; they might have found out you cannot go back to live with your parents, and when they found this out they asked to be your Special Guardian.

Here is some information about the grown-up who has asked to be your Special Guardian:

Name
Who are they?
Do you already know them?

What do you know about them?

What more would you like to know?

What we expect a Special Guardian to do?



When you live with your Special Guardian your parents will still be your mum and dad but you will live with your Special Guardian and they will be expected to look after you until you are grown up.

Your Special Guardian will make the most of the important decisions, for example:

- What school you will go to.
- Who you have contact with.
- Decisions about your health.

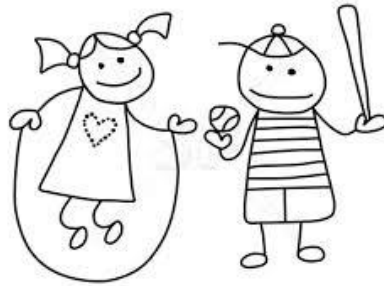
Once a Special Guardianship Order is made, you might no longer need the help of a Social Worker and their work will end. Sometimes children and the people who are going to look after them need a bit more help and a Social Worker would keep working with you.

What will stay the same?

Your name and family will be the same. Your name can be changed if your parents ask if this is ok or a Court decides your name should be changed.

You will not have to change your likes and dislikes. You are who you are and we expect your Special Guardian to support you with your hobbies and in doing the things you like to do.

The way you see your family or keep in touch with them might change; this will be explained in this guide.



What will change?

The main thing that will change for you is that you will be living with your Special Guardian until you are grown up.

If your foster carers are going to be your Special Guardians, then you will know them already and not much will change, except that you will know that you will be staying with them and you won't have to move.

If you are living with family members who became your Special Guardians, not much will change, but you will know that you can stay with them and you won't have to move.



Some children might not be living with the people who want to be their Special Guardian and so the grown-ups will make sure you have the chance to get to know the Special Guardian before moving to live with them.

You will meet your Special Guardian as many times as you need to before you move in with them. You will also be given photos of them and sometimes a DVD. Once you feel happy and settled with them, you will go and live with them. For you to be able to live with your

Special Guardian, the Court makes the decision and we will talk about that later in the guide.



Before moving to live with your Special Guardian, you may have lived with a foster family. Foster families are specially trained to look after children and they will keep you safe and happy until your plan is decided.

Both you and your foster family will feel upset when you leave them but they will also be happy you are going to live with a family who want to look after you while you are growing up.

You might feel sad when you think about moving / not living with your parents or foster carers but your Social Worker and foster carer will help you to talk about these feelings.



Take some time to think about any questions you might have and write them down or ask for help if you need it.

Space to write down any questions you have 	Answers to your questions 

What is a Social Worker?

A social worker's job is to make sure that children are safe. A social worker's job is to try and help parents look after their children safely. If parents still cannot look after their children with help, then the Social Worker asks Judges to make decisions for children.

You can write the name of your social worker here...

My social worker is.....

Their telephone number is.....



Who else is involved in deciding about a Special Guardianship Order?


Lots of people help to finding you a forever family to grow up in. You can talk to any of these people about your feelings and worries and they will listen to you and explain what's happening.

Some of the main people are:

- **You!** You're the most important person.
- Your Social Worker.
- Your Children's Guardian who is sent from the Court.
- Your Solicitor; the Court asks for you to have your very own Solicitor.
- The Judge at the Court.
- Your Parents.
- Your Foster Carer(s).
- Your Special Guardian(s).
- Your Independent Reviewing Officer [they chair your Child Looked After Reviews].

Your Social Worker will always put you first, and they will want you to talk to them or someone you trust about what you want to happen and how you feel. If you are not happy with the Special Guardian chosen for you, talk to someone you can trust, and tell your Social Worker about it. It is very important that you tell them how you feel so they can do something about it.

Take some time to think about any questions you might have and write them down or ask for help if you need it.

Space to write down any questions you have	Answers to your questions 

What are Looked After Children Reviews?

Deciding where you should grow up and what your plan should be is very serious.

Ever since you stopped living with your parents, all of the people involved in your life, like your parents, Social Workers and Foster Carers, have been meeting to make a plan that makes you feel happy and safe. These meetings are called Child in Care Review meetings and you can go along to them as it is important to say what you think and feel.

The grown-up who is in charge of your Review meetings is called an **Independent Reviewing Officer**.

My Independent Reviewing Officer is.....

Their telephone number is.....

What about Contact?

When the Special Guardianship Order is made it doesn't mean that you forget all the people who are important to you. Your Social Worker will help you remember your life with a story book full of pictures and information about you and all your parents and family.

Some children keep in contact with their parents and family and one way of doing this can be by letters. This is something that your Social Worker can talk to you about and your Social Worker will help you understand about contact.

Before the Court makes the Special Guardianship Order, your Social Worker will help you talk about your feelings around seeing your family and who it is good and safe for you to see.

You should try and tell people what you think about contact. If you don't understand what is being planned for you, or don't like the plan, then it is important that we know about this. The grown-ups will talk to you about why they think the plan is best for you. Everybody should be trying to find a way for you to keep in touch with your parents and family. This might be sending cards and letters or sometimes by telephone if the grown-ups think it's not safe for you to meet up with them.

You might also want to keep in touch with friends, teachers and other relatives.

Write down who you would like to keep in contact with. You might want to choose a grown-up to help you do this.



Where will the decision be made?



The **Court** is a place where important decisions like this can be made and the Judge is a person who can make these decisions. The Court is a different kind of Court to where people go when they have done bad things. This is a Family Court, where people talk about you and your family. The hearings are private, which means only people agreed by the Judge can go into the Court room.

The Court will tell a different kind of Social Worker, called a Children's Guardian, from CAFCASS, Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, to talk to those involved. They may want to talk to you. The Children's Guardian will talk to you about what you want the Judge to know about you and the plans being made for you. This information will help the Judge to make a decision about if a Special Guardianship Order should be made.

Not everybody can become a Special Guardian. Social Workers and Judges have to be sure that the people who want to become Special Guardians can look after children and young people properly, so they ask them lots of questions and look into how the adults live and how they care for their own children.

If the Judge is happy with what they are told, all their questions have been answered and the children and young people will be safe and happy with the adult who wants to be their Special Guardian, then they will make the Special Guardianship Order.

Once the Special Guardianship Order has been made, Parental Responsibility, which means the people who can make decisions about you, will be shared between your Special Guardian and your parents. As you will be living with your Special Guardian, they can make the final decisions for you.

Remember; the most important thing is that **YOU** are happy. If you are not happy or don't feel safe, you can talk to your Social Worker or one of the other grown-ups at any time.

Write down a list of grown-ups you can talk to and ask your Social Worker or the grown-up you live with to help write down their names and telephone numbers.

Who I can talk to about how I am feeling about what is happening.

Other useful contact numbers;

The Children's Commissioner for England

The Children's Commissioner for England promotes and protects children's rights in England. The Commissioner does this by listening to what children and young people say about what matters to them and making sure adults in charge take their views and interests into account. Contact details are:

The Office of the Children's Commissioner

Sanctuary Buildings

20 Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT

Tel: 020 7783 8330

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Below are some organisations where there are people who will listen to what you have to say and help you sort out problems. Telephone calls are free, so you can call them from any telephone, including a public telephone box.

Childline

This is a special 24 hour helpline for children who are in trouble or at risk of being hurt or abused. Call free on **08001111** or you can find them on a computer, www.childline.org.uk

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children – NSPCC

If you are experiencing a bad time at home, or being bullied at school or are scared about something, you can ring the NSPCC free on **08008005000** or you can find them on a computer on www.nspcc.org.uk

What about after the Special Guardianship Order is made?

The address of your local Team who can provide advice and guidance about things to do with Special Guardianship Orders is:

North Lincolnshire Adoption and Fostering Service

Church Square House

30 – 40 High Street

Scunthorpe

North Lincolnshire

DN15 6NL

Telephone: 01724 297024

If you would like some help or have any worries, then please ring us (or ask your Special Guardian(s) to) on [**01724 297024**](tel:01724297024) and we will arrange to come and see you. Ask to speak to the Duty Social Worker.

Making a Complaint

If you are really unhappy with the Adoption and Fostering Service and you have tried to tell us but you don't think that it has been sorted, then you can contact the Complaints Person and she is called Julie Poynton. Contact details are:

The Complaints Representations Manager

North Lincolnshire Council

People Directorate

Hewson House

Station Road

Brigg

North Lincolnshire

DN20 8XJ

Telephone Number 01724 296487

If you remain unsatisfied with our response, you may wish to contact the **Local Government Ombudsman** on **0300 061 0614**.

This information in this guide can be made available in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audiotape. Please phone **01724 297024** if you need any of these or any other help to access North Lincolnshire's services.