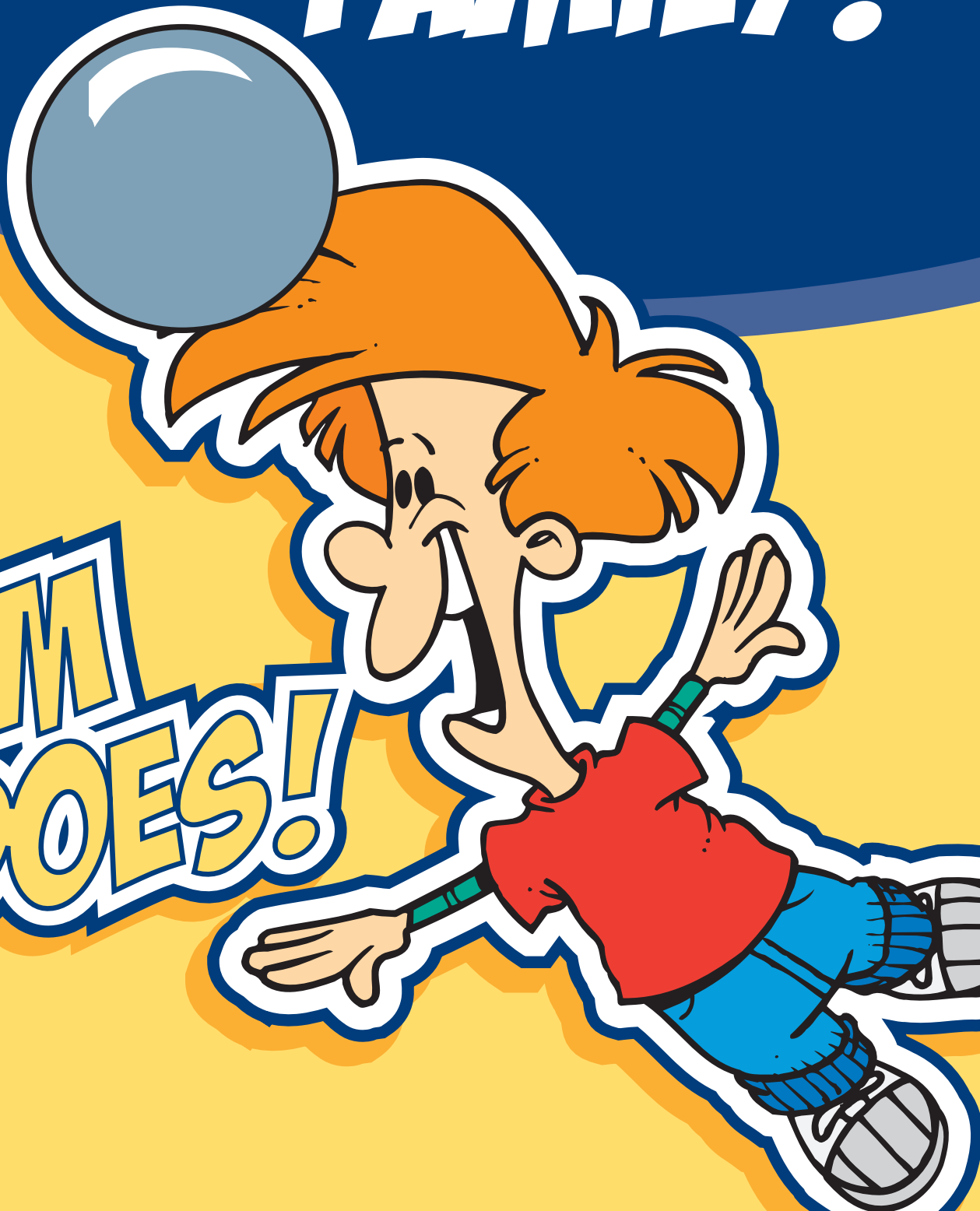


DO YOU LIVE WITH A FOSTER FAMILY?



**SAM
DOES!**

This book belongs to

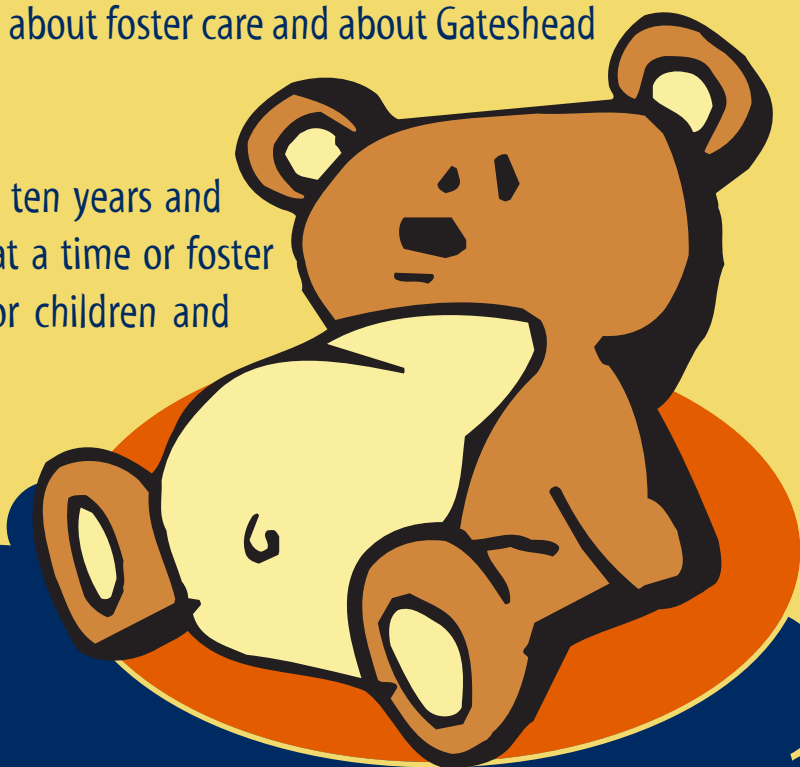
My social worker is

My foster carers are

About this story

This short story about a boy called Sam was written to provide information for younger children about foster care and about Gateshead Council's Fostering Service.

It is especially for children aged ten years and under. A child can read it a bit at a time or foster carers can read out bits of it for children and talk about them.



Sam is eight years old. He lives with his foster family in Gateshead.

When Sam's mum became sad and went to stay in hospital, Sam came to stay with foster carers Jack and Jill.

Sam uses his foster carers first names when he talks to them, for example he says Jill or Auntie Jill.

He doesn't call her mum because he already has a mum.



There are lots of different sorts of foster families.

Some just have a mum, some have a mum and dad and others have lots of children at home, all of different ages.

In Sam's foster family there is Jack and Jill, their son Jamie who is 13 and Sam's brother, Ricky who is 11.

Who's in your foster family?



Sam's social worker is called Mary.

Mary visits Sam regularly and he can talk to her about any worries or problems he may have.

Mary also takes Sam to see his mum sometimes, in the hospital or at their old home.

What's your social worker called?

Sam knows his mum misses him and he misses her a lot.

Sam goes to visit his mum twice a week. He loves to see her but sometimes it is hard because she is upset, which makes him sad.

Jack and Jill always do their best to cheer Sam up if he's feeling sad about missing his mum.

Jill is teaching Sam how to take care of himself.

Sam now brushes his teeth and gets dressed by himself.

Jill runs him a bath, but Sam washes himself with a sponge. But sometimes Jill has to send him back if he hasn't done enough washing!



Sam helps put the clean dishes away in the kitchen after tea.

Jill also likes Sam to keep his room tidy so each night he picks up all his toys and puts his dirty clothes in the washing basket.

Ricky and Jamie also do jobs around the house, Ricky helps Jack in the garden and Jamie helps do the shopping.

What jobs could you help with in the house?



Sam's favourite foods are now roast chicken, mashed potato and sausage casserole.

Jack and Jill cook Sam's favourite meals regularly. They also cook meals he's never tried before. Sam likes trying the new food.

Jill also encourages Sam to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables to help him grow up big and strong.

What are your favourite foods?



Sam enjoys playing football and his favourite team is Newcastle United.

He still plays with the same team that he played with before he lived with Jack and Jill.

Jack has also encouraged Sam to go to swimming lessons.

At weekends, the whole family go out to the countryside, the beach or the swimming baths.

What are your favourite hobbies?



Jill gives Sam pocket money every Saturday.

He spends some of it on sweets or a magazine. He puts the rest in his bank account.

He is saving up for a new computer game and he also wants to get his mum and Ricky something special for Christmas.

What do you spend your pocket money on? Are you saving up for anything?



Sam still goes to the same school he went to before living with Jack and Jill.

He works hard at lessons and his favourite subjects are English and Science.

Sam has only talked to his best friends about living with Jack and Jill instead of with his mum. Sam knows all the teachers know but that they won't say anything to anyone.

Who would you like to tell about living in foster care?



Jill takes Sam to the dentist to get his teeth checked.

Jill also takes Sam to the doctor when he's poorly and looks after him at home.

Last time he was ill, Sam had a sore throat and a cough, so Jill tucked him up in bed and read him a story.



Sam would like to know how long he'll be living with Jack and Jill.

Sometimes a wise man or woman called a judge has to decide if children can go and live with their mums and dads, or if they need to stay with a foster family.

If the judge decides Sam can't live with his mum, he will go to live with another foster family. He won't be able to live with Jack and Jill as they only look after children for a few weeks or months.

Sometimes a group of people get together to have a special meeting about Sam.

This is called a review. People at the meeting include:

- A social worker
- Someone from Sam's family, if possible eg: his mum or his grandad
- His foster carer - Jack or Jill
- Sometimes a health visitor
- Sometimes a teacher
- An independent reviewing officer who is in charge of the meeting

The people at the meeting are there to decide if the plans they are making for Sam are right.

Sometimes Sam goes to the meetings and sometimes he tells his social worker Mary what he wants to say and she tells the people at the meeting.

Sam knows that everyone at the meeting wants the best for him.



Local contact information

The Fostering Service

Gateshead Council, Prince Consort Road, Gateshead NE8 4HJ
Tel: 0191 433 8333

Complaints Team

Gateshead Council, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH
Tel: 0191 433 2408

Gateshead Council's Children and Young People's Rights Service

You will be visited by a worker from this service and provided with contact cards so you can easily stay in touch.

Children and Young People's Rights Service
Gateshead Council, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH
Tel: 0191 433 2647

Independent Advocacy

Action for Children
Children and Young People's Advocacy Service
Mea House, Ellison Place
Newcastle NE 1 8XS
Tel: 0800 085 0621
Email: necrs@actionforchildren.org.uk

Independent Visitors

Action for Children
North East Children's Right Service
Independent Visitor Service
Mea House, Ellison Place
Newcastle NE 1 8XS
Tel: 0191 261 9212

Ofsted

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
Tel: 0300 123 1231

Childline

All calls are free and in confidence
Tel: 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Children's Rights Director

Ofsted
Aviation House, 125 Kingsway
London, WC2B 6SE
www.rights4me.org
Tel: 0800 528 0731

