

WELCOME TO FOSTERING



CARING
HEARTS
FOSTERING



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What is Fostering

Fostering offers children and young people a caring, stable family life when they are unable to live with their birth family at a point in time.

Fostering is when a child is placed in an alternative family who are able to meet their needs. Foster carers provide stability, security and a positive family life for vulnerable children.

Children come into care from diverse backgrounds, cultural settings and with different abilities. Children and young people are looked after for a variety of reasons. The term 'looked after' is used to specify that the local authority is providing accommodation for children and young people. Foster carers provide a room in their home that a child can call their own.

Children may remain in foster carer for short or long periods of time. It all depends on the child's circumstances and needs. Foster carers are special people because they care for vulnerable children, they keep them safe and make sure that they look after their health and support them to achieve at school.

Foster carers look after children in different age categories but it is usually between the ages of 0- 18. Fostering also involves looking after children with disabilities and special needs as well as children who are living in the UK without their parents and family.

Foster carers must attend important meetings and keep information about foster children confidential. They must attend training to help them develop the skills to foster children and work with professionals.

Becoming a foster carer will allow you to make a difference in a child's life.



Benefits of Fostering



Stable and secure environment

For whatever reason, a child in care has been separated from his or her family. They may not be in contact with their friends either, and it is always a stressful situation. By providing stability, the family help the foster child benefit by supporting them through this difficult period. Carers can also give a safe environment that they may not have experienced before. This could provide help with psychological or behavioural issues.

Academic stability

Depending on individual circumstances, a child in care may not have had an opportunity to stay at one school for long periods or they may have experienced difficulties in school. By providing a safe environment and a stable academic situation, children benefit from having less to worry about. This may help them to focus better on school work and eventually improve their academic abilities.

Family life

Children in care may have experienced abuse or neglect. They may have been abandoned or have behavioural problems. Their parents could be suffering long term illness or be in prison. Whatever the reason, some of these children will not have benefited from a normal home life before. Foster care offers that opportunity and for some it could be their first experience of it.

Family contact

Relationship attachments are still strong between children and parents, even when the child has been placed in care. Foster parents offer support and the opportunity to maintain this connection under supervision. Foster Children benefit from controlled contact with their families.

Helping vulnerable children

Helping others is extremely satisfying. Knowing you are providing a child with a stable environment when he or she needs it most is one of the most positive aspects of fostering. Fostering comes with its own challenges and issues. Being able to offer love and security to young people knowing it could have a huge positive impact, is extremely important to foster carers.

Monetary compensation

Money should never be the driving force to fostering, but the monetary allowances help provide the child with certain needs. It also makes it possible for you to open up your home and allow the child to benefit from an opportunity that might not otherwise be available.

Training and development

Fostering offers opportunities to expand your skills through training courses. These are aimed at helping you to deliver a high service to young people in your care, but some of these skills will be transferable across other areas of your life. Better foster care is bound to lead to better parenting of your own children for example. Carers and their families benefit from their involvement with fostering.

Bonding

Developing relationships that can last a lifetime can be a joy to foster parents. It can also be poignant when it comes to saying goodbye, but the pleasure in creating that bond is often seen as a blessing. Foster parents can also benefit greatly from these bonds, and working with different personalities can help you develop as a person.

Permanent placements

Sometimes fostering can lead to long term placements, or even adoption. When a strong bond has been made this is the ultimate reward for both carers and young people in care. Many relationships forged through fostering become lifetime benefits through friendship or companionship.



Common Questions

I am renting, can I still be a foster carer?

Yes, regardless of renting your home or not. The only requirement is to have a spare room for the foster child.

I don't have a spare room – can I foster?

To ensure the child's privacy a spare room is required. The exception is babies who can share a foster carer's bedroom up to 18 months.

Do I need any qualifications to foster?

No. We will provide you with all the necessary training and assist and support you through out. During your time as a foster carer you will also have an assigned social worker to support you.

Can I have pets and foster?

You can have pets and foster; however, it depends on the pet that you have and its behaviour as well as other factors. All to insure the child's safety at home.

I am moving house soon, can I apply to foster before I move?

Your home environment and safety is part of your assessment, it is best to apply after you have moved.

Do I have to have to speak a high standard of English to be a foster carer?

Children in care are from a diverse background and many will not have English as their first language. A good level of speaking and writing will be required to communicate and write reports.

Can I become a foster carer if I smoke?

The environment a foster child is in must be smoke free.

We are a religious family, can we become foster carers?

Religion does not affect your application to become a foster carer. The child's beliefs and views must be respected and needs must be met.

Will I have a say in who I foster?

During our assessment to become a foster carer we will have discussions on all your preferences. All our placements will be well-matched and planned and the final decision to take a placement will be yours.

What support is available?

You will receive ongoing support throughout your fostering experience. We provide various types of support, a member of our team will be allocated to you. The main support you will receive is from your social worker, who will meet with you regularly and discuss any concerns you may have as well as support you and arrange any training necessary. You will also have a support worker and be part of our carer group to help you with ideas. In addition you will have membership of The Fostering Network which provides you with a range of information and advice services.



Our support and carers community

You will receive ongoing support throughout your fostering experience with Caring Hearts Fostering. We provide a range of supporting methods tailored to your needs.

- ✓ A member of our team who is a social worker will be allocated to you to assist and support you.
- ✓ Your social worker will meet with you on a regularly basis to discuss any concerns, support or extra training needs.
- ✓ You will also have a support worker and be part of our carer group to which you can seek advice from other carers or share ideas.
- ✓ You will have membership of The Fostering Network which provides you with a range of information and advice services.
- ✓ You will also be able to contact us at any time 24/7.
- ✓ You will also be provided with paid breaks from your fostering responsibilities.

Caring hearts Fostering is committed in providing you the best level of support available. We will listen to your needs and make sure throughout the process of caring for children we are able to support you and provide you with the relevant skills.



If you enjoy writing there is an opportunity for your blogs to be published on our website and social media platforms. Express your thoughts and keep others informed through our blog online. You can write about your journey and your experiences in fostering.

 Call us: 02088106380

Training we give and specialisms

In order to deliver the highest standards of care for children and young people, Caring Hearts Fostering recognises that full and proper training and development of foster carers and staff is absolutely crucial. Therefore:

1

Initial Skills to Foster training will be followed by an on-going programme of development for all those involved with the agency. Training schedules are arranged annually and are fully responsive to any changes in guidance and legislation that need to be addressed.

2

Foster carers will be encouraged to contribute and give their input as to how we might best enhance the training programme and address areas where a focus is needed. This is an approach that will be combined with our own observations of where to best use our training resources, as well as topics that are consistent with research and best practice development.

3

Foster Carers will be able to attend regularly scheduled support groups that allow informal discussion with other carers and include special guest speakers

4

Foster carers are expected to attend training on a regular basis and take an active interest in advancing their fostering skills.

Our foster agency will work with foster carers to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards Induction framework, within one year of their approval. This is a requirement that will provide a structured approach to their learning.

Once approved you may want to explore additional areas to become specialised in different types of fostering. Different fostering specialisms range from looking after children with disabilities to therapeutic care. We will be able to provide specialist training in a range of different fostering types. This will enable you to feel confident looking after different placements and an opportunity to develop. Our social workers will discuss this with you during your assessment.



Financials

Types of Fostering

Call us: 02088106380



Allowance

All foster carers receive a weekly fostering allowance which is designed to cover the cost of caring for a fostered child. This should cover food, clothes, toiletries and all other expenses incurred in looking after a fostered child.

Tax

Foster carers are generally exempt for paying tax on the fostering allowance, however if your income is above the current government threshold you may have to pay Tax.

National Insurance

All foster carers must register as self-employed and pay National Insurance contributions.

Tax Credits

You may be entitled to working tax credit or child tax credits.

Our accounts team will provide you with financial advice and support throughout.

Emergency placements

A 24 hour a day service where a child can be placed without prior notice. These placements are typically for a number of days.

Short term placements

Placement with an appropriately matched foster carer for a few days, weeks or months whilst plans are made for the child or young person's long-term care.

Long Term (permanent) placements

Placement with an appropriately matched foster carer for a few days, weeks or months whilst plans are made for the child or young person's long-term care.

Parent & child placements

Families that need additional support together.

Bridging placements

Available in situations where children are to ultimately be reunited with their families or are preparing to move to an adoptive family.

Respite placements

These provide a break for parents or offer additional support where a support network is required. Respite is also available for our own foster carers.

Sibling Placements

Siblings can be placed together or if placed separately, arrangements are made for contact between them.

Children with disabilities

Children who need an increased support and care with special circumstances.



Process of becoming carer

Caring Hearts Fostering is committed to the recruitment of carers who share the agency's goal of delivering exceptional standards of care for children and young people.

Following receipt of this welcome guide, if you decide to continue the process, an initial home visit will be arranged where a qualified social worker will conduct a basic assessment of the suitability of the home and the prospective carers.

This initial assessment will also provide an opportunity for the potential carer to ask any further questions they may have and discuss the process of being assessed. Where the initial home visit is successful, the potential foster carer will be asked to complete a detailed application form that includes information about themselves and their family. They will be requested to grant Caring Hearts Fostering consent for the necessary checks and enquiries to be completed to verify their identity and suitability to foster. Statutory checks include a criminal record check, medical check, local authority checks and references from three personal referees, adult children, ex-partners, employers, and schools where birth children are under the age of 18 years old as well as adult birth children whether they are living at home or elsewhere.

The assessment process will be carried out in two stages and will typically take 3-4 months, and possibly up to six months depending on the applicants' circumstances. In addition to home assessments and an interview by a fostering panel, applicants will also be required to attend a 3-day preparation-training course.

 Contact us:
02088106380

1 Make an Inquiry

2 Initial Home Visit

3 Fostering Assessment

4 Preparation Training

5 Panel

6 Approved

Already a Foster Carer?

If you are a current foster carer with an existing agency and are thinking about transferring get in contact with our team and we will provide you with advice and explain the procedure outlined in the 'transfer of foster carers protocol England'.

Transferring to Caring Hearts Fostering will be easy and without disruption to the children placed in your care. Following the transfer protocol and in agreement with the local authority we will ease your transfer to us along with the children placed in your care.

You will receive the same level of payment, expenses and service to support children in your care. Our aim is to give yourself and the children in your care the best experience and stability.

If you are a foster carer without child placements, the process is simpler.

For further information contact us:

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