



community
foster care

Information Pack





Who we are



Community Foster Care provides foster carers to local authorities who are looking to find homes for children and young people. Importantly, unlike many, we operate as a charity which means we do not have shareholders or owners. Therefore, everything is invested back into children and young people, their families and the communities in which we work. From the outset, our founders sought to do things differently, challenging the status quo about who can foster.

Our Mission is to create a community that gives individuals the strength and foundation to realise a better future for young people and families. It takes a community to raise a child. We believe that to achieve our mission we need to work together effectively and we work hard at this.

In this booklet you'll learn how and why people like you successfully foster every day.



Why Foster?

Fostering is one of the most rewarding experiences you will ever have.

Every year thousands of children need to be looked after by foster carers because their families are not able to take care of them for a variety of reasons.

These children are almost always hurt and vulnerable, they can be silent and withdrawn or angry and, without exception, they'll be worried about lots of things. Things like; what is the foster family going to be like? Will I be able to keep in touch with my family and friends? Will they like me? The best place for a child who cannot live with their own family is to be placed with another family who can give them attention, support and lots of time to listen. Children and young people benefit so much from talking and this helps them to make sense of what's happened to them and helps them to think positively about their future.





Why Foster?

This is Wendy and Russell's reason

'We have looked after these children for 18 months and they really enjoy the weekly visits taking the dog for a walk, going fishing with me and doing hair and beauty with Wendy! We have also looked after children on a long-term basis and they stay in touch regularly, visiting with their children.'

Russell says 'Fostering is fabulous' he finds the rewards wonderful seeing children and young people making small but positive steps remembering little pieces of advice he and Wendy have given them.

Every young
person has
the right to a
bright future.





What do I need to provide?

Practically, you'll only need to have a spare room - we will provide training, loads of support and a generous financial allowance.

Personally, however, you will need to be patient, caring, reflective, interested in the child's education and well-being, sympathetic and dedicated. You need to be prepared and so will your family (if you have one), for the ups and downs of fostering. The angry outbursts, the tantrums, the times when your child suddenly wants to talk about painful feelings (and the times when they want to keep those feelings to themselves). You will need to be sensitive to their experiences and their temperaments but also prepared to maintain clear, fair boundaries. You will need, above all, to show willingness to understand them and yourself and embrace learning.

So what keeps Jenny Fostering?

'Everyone needs extra help at some point in their life and it is a privilege to be that person. It feels like everything else I have done in my life has been getting me ready to be a foster carer. I love feeling I am making a difference and helping someone be the best person they can be. I can't take away the past but I can help them move on and be a stronger person. I just love seeing confidence and coping skills grow and being proud of them.'

The practical details...

The process of becoming a carer is not complicated and Community Foster Care will arrange and supervise each stage. We know that people contemplate fostering for a long time and this is a good thing. We are here to answer any questions whilst you do this, without you feeling any pressure to commit.

If you want to find out more about fostering for Community Foster Care, we strongly advise you attend a virtual information event. Here you can hear from some of our foster carers and key staff and get any questions answered. We hold these most months and details can be found on our [Facebook page](#)

Once you register interest in fostering with Community Foster Care, a qualified social worker who has lots of experience working with foster families and looked after children will visit you at home. They will explain all about fostering, answer all your questions, look around your house and see the bedroom(s) that would be used for fostering to check they are appropriate. They will make sure if you have children that they are present so their questions can be answered. If you're married, living together or have a long-term partner, you will both need to be present. It is the whole family that fosters! If you're a single person, don't worry, we have a number of single foster carers and we always need homes for children who benefit from having one-to-one attention.





If, at the end of the interview, both you and Community Foster Care feel that you have the potential to become a foster carer and meet the needs of the children and young people, then you will be invited to our Skills to Foster course. This is an opportunity to learn all about fostering from our Supervising Social Workers and some of our foster carers and you will learn together with other fostering applicants. The course takes about 12hrs, over a weekend or spread over several shorter sessions. All applicants will need to complete this before they can be approved as a foster carer.

Usually, after the training course, if both you and Community Foster Care feel fostering is right for you and your family, we will ask you to complete an application form. Once complete we will then undertake a fostering assessment. This is required by law and looks in detail at your background, your present situation and what you and your family (if you have one) can offer children and young people. The assessment is carried out by a qualified and experienced social worker and takes approximately 8 – 10 visits over 3 to 4 months. Alongside this we carry

out a number of checks including Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks on every member of the family over 18, along with medical and background checks. We also require two referees per applicant who we will then also interview. Should you be successful, you will be required to attend our foster care panel which includes independent members from a variety of relevant backgrounds and experience and makes a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker regarding your approval. The ADM will then consider everything and make a final decision regarding your approval as a foster carer. You shouldn't worry at this stage, we wouldn't be recommending you if we didn't believe in your suitability as a foster carer.

You can find out more information about the Foster Care assessment process here:

[Taking the first steps](#)

[Could you foster?](#)



Our vision is a world where all children and young people grow up in families rich in the essential ingredients required for them to realise their ambitions and dreams.



(The practical details...)

Once approved

When you're approved as a foster carer, you will be allocated a qualified social worker who will ensure you have everything you need to hand before you foster a child. This will include an induction plan, access to training and a 'buddy'.

Local Authorities ask Community Foster Care to provide foster homes for lots of children and the process of 'matching' is very important. This means that we will share all available information about a child with you and take the time to ensure we only ask you to take a child that we feel, with support from our social work team and other foster carers, you will be able to successfully foster and have a rewarding experience. Newly approved foster carers receive weekly supervision visits from a social worker and will have an experienced foster carer as a buddy for 3 to 6 months. Later, we'll ask you to become a buddy to a new Foster Carer! Also, we will contact you regularly to make sure that you can ask any questions or clarify any issues. We realise there is a lot of information to absorb! Please be reassured we are always available by telephone at weekends, bank holidays and out of office hours for advice and support.

As well as having a good training package to develop your skills and knowledge, you will also be given an allowance which covers the cost of caring for a child in addition to a fee for you. This is paid into your bank account on a monthly basis.

More information
can be found [here](#)





‘Fostering is by far the most rewarding experience. It is a real privilege to be part of a child’s journey and to see them flourish and thrive by simply opening your home and your heart to them. Sharing simple life experiences with them that they have never before had the opportunity or encouragement to do really is quite humbling. Every child should have the opportunity to walk bare foot in the grass, have a water fight in the sunshine and be tucked up safe in bed at night. Childhood is precious and being able to foster enables us to make a positive difference to the lives of children who have yet to discover so much, and the reward is all ours!

The support we receive from CFC is outstanding. Fostering is not without it’s hurdles but CFC is behind us every step of the way, not just ensuring the welfare of the children we have on placement, but also recognising that our own health and well-being is of equal importance. CFC staff really do live their values and choosing to embark on our fostering journey with them was the best decision we could have made. ‘

Dem, Foster Carer

Why Foster with Community Foster Care?

There are lots of reasons to choose Community Foster Care for your fostering career. Our foster carers tell us that there is a real sense of being involved in a big family or community. As an Independent Foster Agency (IFA) we're quite small, so you will get to know everybody well.

Our values are critical to us and really do inform our practice and decisions. Our charitable status means that all our funds are used to enhance the lives of children, families and our communities. It also means that our Trustees won't be selling to another bigger agency, which can happen with private (for profit) IFAs.

Our culture includes promoting life-long learning in us all, celebrating success and learning from our mistakes and we can only be successful by working effectively together with partners in and out of the community.

We are committed to having a physical office in each of our communities for you to come and meet staff and carers, attend training and other meetings. Central to our approach is to provide you with all the support we possibly can. Community Foster Care works with many very talented people. We understand that for you

to be successful in looking after children and young people, we need to look after you and our staff. We also believe that we are all stewards of Community Foster Care and, therefore, everybody is given a voice in how it develops.

Fundamentally we are able to put the needs of children above all other considerations and this keeps us true and enables us to be more creative, challenging some of the existing dynamics in the system that aren't working well.

For more information on why to choose CFC, [Click here](#)

Therapeutic Practice

At Community Foster Care we are committed to building and developing our therapeutic practice. We work with a group of very personable, highly experienced psychotherapists in various ways. They facilitate reflective discussion groups for staff and carers, lead training and offer individual consultations with carers and their supervising social workers.

We are working towards developing a clear model of therapeutic fostering. In doing so we are collaborating with Appcios and its members to enable these approaches to be well considered and embedded into our practice in a meaningful way.



What payments and benefits do Foster Carers receive at Community Foster Care?

We believe that it is fundamental that our families have the resources needed to enable them to do a successful job as a foster carer. Our foster carers don't foster for the financial rewards but it is an important consideration for anyone thinking about fostering.

- The weekly foster care payment consisting of an allowance for meeting the needs of the child or young person and a reward element.
- This is paid for each child or young person. It can rise for children with more complex needs.
- We also provide foster carers with 14 days planned breaks during a full year, which can be paid if not used.
- We also provide all foster carers with membership of Fostering Network
- We provide all foster households with membership of Perkbox, providing a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits, plus hundreds of retail discounts.

You can read our Finance Policy for Foster Carers [here](#)



More information

Fostering can be tough and although Community Foster Care will train you and support you every step of the way, you're the one who does the real work. If you decide not to proceed or if you proceed and decide it's not for you, no one will blame you or think less of you. Fostering is a big challenge and it doesn't work for everyone. But if you're able to stay with the process, if you're able to guide and support and care for children who are placed with you, you will not only have achieved something remarkable for yourself but you will change lives for the better forever...

More detailed information can be found on our Statement of Purpose and Function [here](#)

Through reading our Ofsted reports [here](#)

By accessing our Foster Carer policies [here](#)

Have you got a question about Fostering?

Contact **0800 0124 278** or Community Foster Care info@communityfostercare.co.uk

Should you wish, you can also email Emma Weaver, Registered Manager, directly on EmmaW@communityfostercare.co.uk

Or email the Chief Executive, Mark Kingston, on MarkK@communityfostercare.co.uk

How we look after your information

We take your privacy seriously. We believe in safeguarding the privacy of people we work with while providing a personalised and beneficial service.

We collect personal information from you when you make an enquiry to be a foster carer. We use this information to process your enquiry and provide the most appropriate response. We may also use information in aggregate form to help us analyse and develop our marketing techniques. Please be assured that any information shared with the organisation will be treated as confidential and won't be passed on to third parties.

If you have any requests or queries at any time concerning your personal information or our practices, please email

info@communityfostercare.co.uk

or write to us at Unit A 76 Kingsholm Road, Kingsholm Road, GL1 3BD.



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