

Telford Fostering

Children's Safeguarding & Family Support

Types of Fostering



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1. Short Term Foster Carer

Short term fostering means providing a child or young person with a place to stay until they can return to their own family, or until it becomes evident that they need a more permanent foster placement or possibly adoptive parents. Short term fostering is a very important part of the fostering service since many of the children who come into care need a short term solution to domestic or parental issues which prevent them from living at home for a certain period of time.

What does short term fostering involve?

A short term foster placement can last from a few days to up to two years depending on the situation. A short term foster carer will need to be available to respond to urgent or short notice requirements for foster placements from Telford and Wrekin. Some short term placements could be caring for preschool children. These carers will be often tasked with supporting the child to return to their parents or birth family or moving the child on to their adoptive family. Short term fostering often involves supporting the child with high levels of contact with their birth families.

They may also find they are needed to:

- Support a child through a difficult transitional period in their lives.
- Help a child to rebuild a broken relationship with their own parents after a family crisis or domestic issues.
- Assist a child in building an entirely new relationship with a long term foster family or adoptive parents.
- Provide support to a child while their parent is in hospital or recovering from health issues.

Why do we need short-term foster care?

In short term fostering, a foster carer is relied upon to provide a safe, secure place to live while a child carries on their day-to-day life, continuing to attend school and see their friends and family wherever possible. Short-term placements cover a number of situations, such as:

- Bridging placements, when a child or young person is awaiting a more permanent home.
- Remand placements, whilst a child undergoes court proceedings.
- Assessments.
- Parental illness or family breakdowns for the duration of care proceedings.

During a short term, fostering placement the child's social worker is working on the child's care plan to determine the child's future. In some cases, staying with the short-term foster carer and making the home a more permanent arrangement may be the outcome, if all parties agree that this is the best thing for the child.

2. Long Term Foster Carer

Long-term fostering placements give a child or young person somewhere to live and grow for a number of years if they cannot return to the care of their own families. This can last for many years, usually until the child becomes ready for adult life and can progress to a Staying Put arrangement.

How does a long term foster placement work?

With a long term, foster placement a foster carer makes the child or young person a fully integrated member of their family. Often the Court has made a Care Order, meaning that the local authority will be legally responsible for the child, as they have resumed 'parental responsibility' through the court process.

Children coming into a long term fostering placement need a stable, solid and loving home environment where they can feel truly settled and at ease.

What is the difference between adoption and long term fostering?

Long term fostering allows a child or young person to maintain contact with their birth family if it is felt to be in their best interest. This may be only limited contact, but it maintains a link with the child's parents, which may be important to them and their identity. Adoption is a more permanent arrangement and it is legally binding; giving the adoptive parents exclusive parental rights to the child.

The matching process

If you decide you would like to become a long term foster carer, your supervising social worker will look at your abilities and compare them closely with the needs of children who are awaiting long term foster families. If there is a child who appears to be a good match for what you and your family can offer, they will inform you and share all relevant information so that you can make the right decision. You will then have the opportunity to meet the child concerned and ensure it would be the best placement for everyone concerned.

3. Respite Foster Carer

Respite foster care is a fostering placement for a limited time only. A respite foster carer cares for a child for a week or two at a time, for example during school holidays, or at weekends- this is often the same child at regular intervals. Foster carers who offer respite fostering generally look after children who are already cared for on a full time basis by other foster carers. This respite period can benefit both the foster carer and the child by giving some 'respite' or a short break from the usual duties of care. We also require Fostering Plus respite carers to provide Fostering Plus carers and the children they care for with a regular short break.

Why is respite fostering needed?

Respite fostering is required for a number of different circumstances. For example, a full time foster carer may need a break to recharge or they may have urgent family commitments to attend to. Sometimes if a fostering placement is particularly challenging a fostering provider may arrange for them to have a short break from the placement.

What is involved in respite fostering?

Respite fostering involves working closely with the full time carer who is usually responsible for the child. It's also important to reassure a child that the respite placement will only be for a short time period and that they will be able to return to their usual home afterwards. This can often be a stressful period for a foster child who may already be feeling the effects of previously disruptive changes.

What are the benefits of respite fostering?

- Respite fostering is extremely important to the well-being of many foster families. This is because this type of fostering can:
- Provide vital support to foster carers
- Allow carers to enrich the lives of children or young people on a short term basis
- Have a huge impact on a child and a foster parent's quality of life, giving the respite foster carer the chance to make a real difference in the lives of both parties.

4. Emergency Foster Carer

Emergency fostering is needed for situations where a child needs a foster home urgently, either for a night, for a few days or even longer. This could occur during the day as well as at night, on weekends and other unexpected times.

The ability to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances is extremely important, and the foster carer must have a spare room set aside in their home for these emergencies. Emergency fostering is a type of foster care in its own right, but it can also be done in addition to other placement types, for example longer term fostering placements.

Why emergency fostering is needed

Emergency fostering is an important part of the fostering service. There are many different situations where a child or young person might need a home at short notice, for example if a parent is taken into hospital and there is no one else to care for them, or if there is a child protection issue in the family.

Often when children need emergency foster care, they are confused or frightened. They may be traumatised by the circumstances that have led them to need shelter. It is important that a foster carer keeps this in mind and provides children with a stable, warm and understanding environment, acting with sensitivity at all times.

Emergency fostering placements

Once the child or young person is placed with the foster family, the child's social worker assesses if it is appropriate and in the child's interest to return to their family. If this is not possible, a short-term placement will be sought and you will be involved in this transition for the child.

5. Child with a Disability Foster Carer

As a disability foster carer you'll offer a nurturing home to children with complex needs like medical conditions, physical disabilities, learning difficulties or autism.

Why should I consider complex needs or disability fostering?

This is a very specialised type of fostering, but the skills and experience you gain will be invaluable. And of course we will give you all of the practical and emotional support you need to be able to nurture and develop a child with such complex needs.

The children you'll be looking after will have a range of physical, learning and emotional disabilities. But we will work closely with you, providing specialist guidance and training to ensure that together we can give the child the care and support they need to thrive.

This kind of care is offered from birth until adulthood, and it can be [short-term](#) or [long-term](#).

6. Short Break / Family based shared Foster Carer

Short break fostering involves providing regular short breaks for a child or young person who you are carefully matched with. The child will remain living with their main carer or parent and the Short break carer will offer regular overnight stays to the child to assist the carers in their role.

This type of fostering typically suits people who would like to foster but also continue to work full or part-time or who maybe considering taking up fostering full-time but what to build up their experience first.

Who can be a short break carer?

First of all you do need to have a spare room but you do also need to be able to commit to providing regular short breaks and building a relationship with a child or young person.

Most people can be short break carers and we have foster carers from all different types of backgrounds. You don't need to have had your own children you just need to want to make a difference to a child or young person's life, for example, one weekend a month.

What are the different types of short breaks?

- [Disability Short Breaks](#) - for a child who may be at home or who may be with full-time foster carers.
- [Support Care –](#) this is to help to prevent children or young people coming into the care system by offering their families support before difficulties escalate to a point where the family can no longer manage. Foster carers offer part-time care to provide both the children and their families with a break. Arrangements are made to suit the needs of the family.

How often do the short breaks take place?

Typically one weekend a month which is planned in advance with you but can also be during school holidays. This however can differ between children and the amount of care you will provide the child will be agreed prior to the short breaks commencing.

7. Fostering Plus

Fostering Plus is an intensive support specialist fostering scheme providing tailored family experiences to children in the care of Telford and Wrekin Council.

Who qualifies for this role?

If you are over 21 years old, have a spare bedroom, can be available for the child on a full time basis and have significant personal or professional experience of managing children with

complex needs then you could be considered for the role of a fostering plus carer. An example of professional experience could include:

- Residential care worker
- Inclusion mentor
- Working with children with learning disabilities
- Mental Health practitioners
- Experienced foster carer

Ideally the child will be the only child in the household, however we will consider foster carers with other children in the household if these children are settled, secure and assessed as likely to cope with a child with complex needs.

What Qualities do I need?

To be a fostering plus carer the qualities you need to possess are:

- Have a high level of resilience which can be complemented by the support on offer by the local authority.
- Calm in your approach.
- Hold good communication and interpersonal skills.
- Hold a good understanding of attachment and the effects of trauma and neglect can have on children.
- Experience of managing the complex behaviours of children.
- To embrace change and uncertainty.
- Highly motivated.
- To have the ability to self-reflect on interventions and strategies, be open to constructive feedback and to alternative ways of working.
- To be able to work within a team towards the long-term goals and plans for the child. This includes at times taking direction from others.

- To be able to assess children's needs and provide written reports, attend and contribute to meetings as required.
- To be confident to adapt your parenting approach to support the individual child's emotional and developmental needs.
- To be committed to your personal development as a foster carer and undertake training in line with the placement requirements and to support your understanding of the needs of the child in your care.

Expectations of Fostering Plus Carers

- The foster carer will be an integral part of the foster care team and will engage in regular meetings with members of the team.
- The foster carer will be committed to the child's individualised daily programme set out and agreed with the child's plan.
- The foster carer will be committed to attending and completing mandatory and identified training.
- The foster carer will be committed to the child for the duration of the programme and or until permanency, plans have concluded.
- The foster carer will attend meetings where individual plans will be reviewed.
- The foster carer will monitor the child's behaviour and progress and convey information regarding behaviours verbally via their dedicated fostering social worker.
- The foster carer will keep written recordings of the child's presenting behaviour, the effectiveness of strategies and any other observations required and make them available to the fostering social worker and the child's social worker. The frequency of the recording is agreed within the foster carer's supervision agreement.
- The foster carer will support the child to attend any therapy or identified sessions to support their needs.

- The foster carer will work with the child's social worker and the team to support a child who may be excluded from school.
- Foster carers only offering respite care for the placement should attend meetings prior to the relief care period. All parties to ensure handover is provided appropriately to ensure consistency.
- The foster carer will assist in the training and support of new carers.
- For couples, a commitment from both carers to attend training to develop skills and knowledge and maintain consistency is expected.

8. Parent and Child Foster Carer

Parent and child fostering is a type of provision where parents can be supported alongside their children within a foster family. This usually involves placing a baby or child, along with either one or both parents, in a foster home where they can learn to cope with parenthood in safe and secure environment. In many cases, the parent has become a parent at a very young age and, for one reason or another, cannot remain in their own homes.

What are the benefits of parent and child fostering?

Parent and child fostering brings with it benefits for both the child and parents involved. Firstly, the child or infant benefits from being in a stable family environment with consistent care gives i.e. their parent/s and usually the parent gains invaluable emotional support as well as learning the skills required for motherhood, such as how to hold or feed a baby. It is also an opportunity to monitor situations where a concern about parenting has been identified. Young parents may also have the opportunity to carry on with their studies and complete schooling with the extra support provided.

What is required of a foster carer?

The fostering assessment and matching process are thorough and will always aim to place a parent and child in the best possible foster family. To be an effective foster carer in a parent and child, fostering placement there are numerous qualities and skills a person needs. These include:

- The ability to treat new parents with sensitivity
- Assertiveness and the confidence to lead by example
- Observational skills and the willingness to observe and record how the parent looks after the child, whilst being unobtrusive
- Patience and encouragement when passing on advice and parenting skills

Foster carers stay in close communication with the supervising social worker and are expected to contribute to reviews and meetings to report on the progress of the placement. By providing a consistent support network, the aim is that the child and parent are given the best possible chance to grow and develop in a nurturing environment.

9. Foster carer for children whom are unaccompanied and asylum seeking children

Children who arrive in the UK without their parents or carers usually go into the care of their nearest public authority and will often live with approved foster carers when there is no suitable family member or guardian to care for them.

There are many reasons why a child or young person may feel that they are no longer safe in their home country. War, oppression and civil unrest can create situations in which many children may fear for their lives.

Asylum-seeking children may have experienced persecution for their beliefs, or because of their ethnic or social group. Some may have seen adults they loved murdered, beaten, tortured or raped; others may have had members of their family 'disappear' with no warning or explanation. Some may have come from a country where they would have been forced to fight as a child soldier if they remained.

What is involved in fostering unaccompanied and asylum seeking children?

This is a different type of foster care. The child may have come from a home that was safe and secure within itself while being in a very hostile world where no members of the family were secure.

In reality the unaccompanied children and young people that enter the country seeking asylum tend to be mostly boys aged between 15 and 17 (approximately 75%). They arrive here following much traumatised journeys but often with a high level of independence and a reliance on the groups and friends they have formed during their experiences. The foster carer will need the resilience to deal with the differences of ethnicity, language, culture and religion.

Alongside the task of caring for these children on a day-to-day basis, foster carers will also need to support them through the process of applying for permission to stay in the UK, and possibly to prepare for the return to their home country. The foster carer will be fully supported by a dedicated social worker experienced in working with unaccompanied and asylum seeking children. Many unaccompanied children, seeking asylum will also have particular emotional, practical, language and cultural needs that their foster carers will have to consider.

We would encourage people who think they might have the skills, experience and willingness to look after a young person who has arrived in the UK unaccompanied to let their fostering service know. Foster carers looking after unaccompanied children will require support to offer them the stability and the help they need; Telford and Wrekin ensure that their carers are trained, equipped and supported to deal with the particular challenges of meeting the needs of unaccompanied children.