



Fusion News

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A message from the Directors



Throughout 2017, Fusion continued to grow and develop in a positive and honourable fashion. This was thanks to the support of our foster carers, who we see as the most important asset in our organisation as they provide the day-to-day input required for our young people to thrive.

We also began the process of establishing six independent registered offices to provide us with a countrywide service. This will ensure that foster carers receive local support that is high quality, consistent and meets the needs of modern foster families.

Adding to this in 2018, we're very keen to increase our young people's participation through the recently created app, Sidekick. This allows the user to find key information and,

even more importantly, contribute their views, opinions and ideas to help us continue to evolve as an organisation.

Story continues inside...

If you'd like to have a chat about fostering, give us a call on 03301 239355 or fill in our [contact form](#). Whether it's an expression of interest, advice on a particular topic or just a quick question, we're always happy to help.

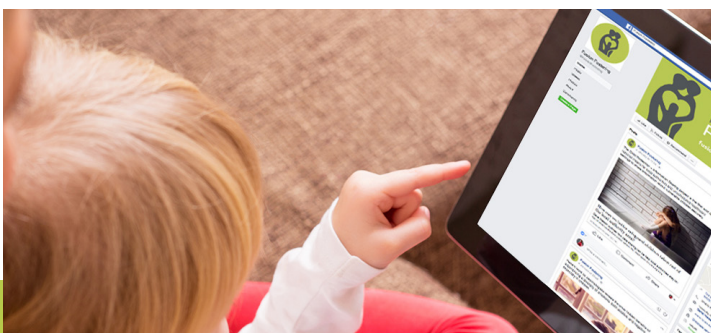


Thank you for supporting the Fusion Shoebox Appeal!

We'd like to thank everyone who helped make the first ever Fusion Shoebox Appeal a huge success. Organised in partnership with **Humbercare**, the appeal invited individuals, families, businesses and organisations to donate items for Hull's homeless community. Everything from clothing and toiletries to food and sleeping bags were welcome, plus anything else that the public thought might come in handy during the festive period.

The response was incredible, with hundreds of boxes taken to Dock House (a shelter run by Humbercare), as well as the C4DI, Hull Daily Mail offices and St Stephen's Shopping Centre, which kindly acted as drop-off points. We also collected items from care partners across the UK in our newly branded Fusion van, driven by Marketing Director, James Ash.

[Visit the News & Events page on fusionfostering.com for the full story](#)



Fusing together our Social Communications

We'll be increasing our social media activity on our existing **Facebook** and **Twitter** accounts, plus you can now find us on **Instagram**. Make sure to follow us for all kinds of useful and motivational insight. We've also set up a **YouTube** channel, as videos will play a large role going forward.



YOU'RE A STAR

Celebrating success stories and good news

YP = Young Person

YP who is placed with Alice and James Wood recently got a certificate for class student of the week. He is doing really well academically and is making good progress with his handwriting, reading and maths and has moved up a level.



YP who is placed with Maureen Harris is doing really well on her travel and tourism course and has just got herself a part time job.



Since being placed with Teresa and Brian in March 2017, YP has made a lot of progress. She has become much more confident and will happily walk to the shops alone. She now attends karate classes and has won certificates and is due to take her first grading this week. YP has recently started a new secondary school in Plymouth and so far is really enjoying this experience.



YP was placed in Pippa Lea's care in January 2016. Prior to this YP had been living in a residential school. YP soon got into a routine with Pippa although it took several months for him to settle down. Initially, YP's school said that he would probably have to stay in school for an extra 2 years, to be able to be entered for his exams, however, after 6 months of hard work he was entered for a Maths GCSE and passed with top marks. 12 months later YP passed a higher level Maths and English functional skills. Pippa has also encouraged YP to join Air Cadets and also have swimming lessons. More recently, YP has been developing his independence skills further and is able to get a bus into the local town by himself. YP also has a good relationship with Pippa and has sought her help and advice on a number of issues. This has included some difficulties that he has had during contact that he had with his birth family. YP has recently got himself a job at Costa Coffee which he did independently. Pippa has continued to support YP in developing his skills and independence in preparation for adulthood.



I just wanted to say a well done to my foster carers Richard and Jayne Clarke. They have been fostering for a year now and have YP in placement. Since YP has been with them YP has made such excellent progress and is now in school full time (which was unheard of).

Jayne had a meeting with Bristol Commissioning today and the chair commented on how well Jayne is doing and even gave her a hug for all the commitment she has shown.

Whilst speaking with YP's previous school, Pippa was informed he was 4 years behind in his studies, he only attended school in the mornings, and did 15 minutes work at a time. Since being placed with Pippa, YP has been attending school full time, and although he started working out of the classroom with a full time teaching assistant, by the end of the school year (1 1/2 terms) he was working full time in the classroom and was only 2 years behind in his studies. This was due to YP's hard work and motivation to succeed. YP has also listened to everything Pippa has told him about healthy eating and drinking plenty of water, and in 7 1/2 months, he has lost 10 inches from his waist and looks a lot healthier. Pippa has continued to speak to YP about the importance of eating healthy foods and taking exercise. Pippa joked, 'if only I could heed my own advice'. Pippa has also got YP to grow some vegetables on the allotment vegetable patch that she has. In addition to this, YP is involved in attending a Martial Arts class and swimming lessons at the local pool.



YP aged 8 was awarded "Star of the Week" Head Teacher's award at the end of week commencing 12 June.

And finally...

Congratulations YP on making this fabulous cake with the help of your boyfriend's mum for your foster carer Tony's birthday... bake off here you come!!



We are really keen to hear more good news stories. Please send them to James Ash, Marketing Director, jash@fusionfostering.com

A message from the Directors (continued)

In 2017 we were inspected by Ofsted in three regions, all of which were given a "good" rating. The inspections reported that a real strength of the business is our foster carer training, which is our top priority due to it being integral to every element of a foster family's journey.

However, we were also told that we're not always good at shouting about our successes, which is why we're making big changes this month and throughout the year. These include the redeveloped website, increased social media activity, a weekly blog post, a diverse events calendar, and an exciting e-newsletter that shares ways to get involved. All of this is being overseen by our new Marketing Director, James Ash.

We're so proud of achieving this Ofsted score across all areas. It's a mighty challenge due to the government's understandably high standards, which is why we consider it one of our biggest achievements of last year.

Ron Scurr, Director

Another main goal was to build relationships with fellow agencies and strong links across the wider support services network. This saw us teaming up with Barnardo's and Action for Children, as well as inviting a theatre group to present work to carers and children that raised awareness of sexual exploitation of young people and how to combat it.

This community activity ties in nicely with what James will be enhancing during 2018, a large part of which is our upcoming Fusion Festival. This will prove an exciting opportunity for our young people to take an active role in putting on a fun-filled family event. (Spoiler alert: Look out for our new mascot!)

All of this activity couldn't come at a better time, as the last few months saw us take on new staff, including managers Heather, John and Darren. Together as a team, Fusion Fostering is all set to make 2018 the most interactive and collaborative year yet!

Dave Tucker, Operations Director



FUSION FOSTERING NEEDS YOU!

Over 7,000 new foster families are needed in the UK. Can you help?

No child should have to live without a safe home and loving family, which is why Fusion Fostering is committed to recruiting new carers across the UK. As an independent agency, we allocate carers a single point of contact that remains with you throughout your journey, offering advice, support and encouragement when you need it most.

When it comes to potential carers, we receive a lot of questions regarding eligibility. At Fusion we believe that the only criteria you need to fit is having the skills and capacity to look after a child within your home, so it doesn't matter if you're single or over 55. If you have a previous criminal conviction, you may still be able to foster. Whatever your situation, together we'll discuss it in a confidential setting and a DBS check is mandatory during each application. Put simply, our mission is to match children with devoted carers, so we invite anyone with an interest to get in touch.

In the UK, a child comes into care in need of a foster family ever 20 minutes.

Aside from the basic requirement of somewhere to live that offers love, security and access to enriching activities, it is also crucial that siblings are not split up. However, in England alone there are currently 455 groups of siblings that have been separated, which can lead to anxiety, depression and a feeling of isolation that could otherwise be prevented.

Providing that you have a spare room and can allocate the time that a child needs to thrive and grow, chances are that you can become a carer with Fusion Fostering. If you're worried that you don't have the right skill set, you'll be pleased to hear that we provide high quality training to help you fully grasp your role, establish a positive framework of values, and create an individual professional development plan. We guarantee that by working with Fusion, the learning process isn't restricted to the children.

Over 7,000 new foster families are required in the UK over the next 12 months

To give you an extra nudge to take action, there are probably more children in need of foster care than you realise. When you look at the figures, it's clear that something needs to change.

97% of fostering services particularly need carers for teenagers, and 86% need people to care for sibling groups.

If you'd like to have a chat about fostering, give us a call on 03301 239355 or fill in our contact form. Whether it's an expression of interest, advice on a particular topic or just a quick question, we're always happy to help.

Together we can make 7,000 new foster families and give children across the UK the opportunities they deserve.

Ofsted's Annual Report

The government department began its most recent programme of inspections of children's services departments four years ago. In that time, the sector has seen significant overall improvement, including children's social care in more than one-third of local authorities being rated good or outstanding, compared with one-quarter in March 2016.

Queen's New Year Honours List

Whilst some people who received an honour from The Queen are household names, such as Ringo Starr and Jilly Cooper, others are everyday people who have achieved extraordinary things. One of them is Stella Tomkinson, a 79-year-old great-grandmother from Nuneaton who has fostered more than 100 children over 50 years.

Stella and her late husband, Bill, became foster carers in the 1960s, having found out that they couldn't have children of their own. In 1962 they adopted a baby and applied to adopt another child, but were asked to instead foster a girl with health problems. This led to the couple fostering children for anything from a few months, all the way to the point where they had reached adulthood and could move into their own homes.

Though Stella stopped fostering in 2015, she set up a weekly support group for parents of children with disabilities through her local Mencap Society. She has six adopted children, 16 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Fairness for Foster Families

Families Minister, Robert Goodwill, announced the excellent news that foster children will be entitled to the same amount of free childcare as other children. This followed the government's flagship childcare policy that was introduced in September, which increased free hours to thirty a week for children aged three to four. However, it clearly stipulated that foster children were excluded, which understandably sparked campaigners to demand fairness across the board.

Whilst a date for the change coming into effect hasn't yet been released, The Fostering Network believes it won't be before September. Still, more details will be released soon and it's a definite win for foster families across the UK.

Introducing James

We're very excited to have taken on James Ash as our new Marketing Director. Following a diverse career working with young people in the UK and abroad, underprivileged groups and adults with learning disabilities, he is dedicated to active learning, social inclusion and creating exciting opportunities.

Following his focus researching the fostering industry, we're confident that James will help Fusion to achieve great things in 2018. His experience organising events, marketing campaigns and public engagement activities is a huge win for the company, so stay tuned for tons of fun things to get involved in over the coming months.

These kids are on the ball!

As well as sponsoring the kit for the Manchester Mystics U14 basketball second team, Fusion funds two players who otherwise wouldn't be able to take part. Many of the girls come from disadvantaged backgrounds, so we're very passionate about helping them to get involved in a sport that sharpens their physical and mental abilities.

Ray Porter is our Care Partner in the North West and he's a big fan of Greater Manchester Community Basketball, which over the years has led to young people going on to study scholarships in the USA and ultimately become professional players.

Fusion Success!

YP came to her carer in East Yorkshire having been out of education for nearly a year, she would not engage with professionals and was resistant to being in foster care. YP was often aggressive and argumentative due to fear of being moved and constant rejection she had faced. YP has over the last 6 months been on a remarkable journey with her carer and carers family.

They have accomplished so much together and are very much a team. YP is a very intelligent, bright and resilient young woman with huge potential, she merely required the right placement where her carer believed in her and accepted her for who she is. Due to this she has gone from strength to strength and recently wrote and recorded her own song about her own experiences. The song has powerful lyrics that tell her story - **check it out on our YouTube channel.** YP continues to face obstacles, however she is encouraged by her carer to overcome them. We are amazed at the progress YP has made in such a short time and we really want to celebrate her fully along with her carer who has been committed and available in times of crisis and need.

This is a wonderful success story and we're looking forward to seeing what obstacles will be overcome next. Matching is key when we place children, this is a very good example of when we get it right!

We also want to celebrate Sharon - a carer in East Yorkshire. We have met some amazing carers over the years but Sharon's commitment as a new carer to a 15 year old girl has blown us all away.

Sharon managed one of the most complex placements, which involved a child being sexually exploited, abusing substances and being missing for long periods. Sharon managed this placement for nearly a year before the YP was moved for her own safety out of area. This meant that Sharon was reporting this YP missing daily, waiting up until early hours with no sleep to ensure the police had located her and being available to manage the behaviour that came with substance misuse and child sexual exploitation.

The YP was often aggressive, unpredictable and sad. Sharon remained available throughout, and her daughters also played a significant role taking turns on an evening to report the YP missing so Sharon could get some sleep. This was a highly emotive, and at times very risky placement. The YP was engaging with very risky individuals, which was of grave concern for all involved including the potential risk to the foster carer's family. Sharon remained committed to the YP and placed her needs above all.

We congratulate Sharon and her family for their commitment, resilience and sheer effort in trying to keep this YP safe from harm for over a period of 10 months. We are very aware that whilst this placement needed to end due to the level of risk, the YP will be able to appreciate the efforts of the foster family in trying to engage the YP and keep her safe from harm.

Together we can make 7,000 new foster families and give children across the UK the opportunities they deserve.



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