



## Contact

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## Enquiry Pack

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



[fusionfostering.com](http://fusionfostering.com)



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# About Us

We're a small independent agency with a family approach. Our team is dedicated to supporting children alongside the amazing individuals and families who open up their lives to care for them.

## OUR UNIQUE APPROACH

What makes us unique to any other fostering agency is that our dedicated team of professionals are highly trained, valued and committed to improving outcomes, resulting in better life chances for children who are often bewildered, frightened and feel lost.

On meeting a member of our team, you remain with them from the start of your initial enquiry, to when a child or children are placed. They will then support you during any challenging times.

## THE JOURNEY

Sharing a child's journey through care can be immensely rewarding and life changing for all of us. When the innovation, patience, creativity, flexibility and belief of foster carers meet the courage, resilience, personality and determination of the individual children placed, it is incredible to see what can be achieved.

Our carers recognise the power of ordinary childhood experiences and the importance of seemingly small things to children and young people. A smile, encouragement, interest in their achievements, understanding when things are difficult, or perhaps just a hug when it's most needed can make all the difference.

## THE CHALLENGE

Understandably, foster care is not without its challenges, as helping a child heal from often painful histories takes time. It is our belief as an agency that it is not what we do when things are going well, but what we can offer during the difficult times that really matters.

Whilst children and young people often need a lot of support from robust and trusted carers to recover from their difficulties, foster carers also require quality support and to feel that their efforts are being delivered as part of a team. This is where our priorities lie and we are absolutely committed to remaining more than an agency that places children. In every sense, fostering is a shared task and our carers rightly remind us of the importance and value of that wider commitment.

The children and young people we support come from a diversity of backgrounds, cultures and experiences. There really is no single blueprint of a foster carer, so at Fusion Fostering we are looking to recruit, develop and work with carers from all walks of life.



## Becoming a foster carer

**Fusion Fostering recognises that the decision to foster is one of the biggest life changes you will make. Becoming a foster carer is a lifestyle choice that needs to include the whole family.**

**Taking the time to give your loved ones the opportunity to explore what it will mean for them, ask questions and discuss any reservations is important.**

Being a foster carer is rewarding – but it can also be challenging. Some young people need additional support in their placement. That's why we employ professionals, both internally and externally, to support you, your family and the young person.

### WHO FOSTERS?

One of the strengths of fostering is that it attracts people from all different backgrounds with a wealth of reasons for choosing to get involved. Choosing the agency that best matches your expectations and aspirations is central to your success and happiness in fostering. We welcome applications from people who are older, single, live rurally or in the city, working, not working, home owners or those who live in rented accommodation.

Put simply, we are interested in talking to people from the broad demographics that make up our society. Never think that you won't be what we're looking for, please call and find out. We promise a warm welcome and as much time as you need to decide whether fostering is right for you.

### TRANSFERRING FOSTER CARERS

Sometimes we have existing foster carers looking to transfer over to Fusion Fostering. Like with all applicants, someone from our team will come out to meet with you to introduce our agency.

If you chose to proceed, Fusion Fostering will use the framework of the Fostering Network Transfer protocol, to guide you through this process, whilst ensuring that it is the right decision for you and your family.

**We are committed to providing good quality training which:**

- Helps foster carers gain a better and meaningful understanding of their role
- Establishes a positive framework of values to promote good outcomes for children and young people.
- Encourages foster carers to take responsibility for their own professional development through their individual training profiles

### IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME?

Think about why you want to foster and why now is the right time. Do you have the support of your immediate and wider family?

Fostering in many ways is a lifestyle choice and impacts upon all those involved often in ways you may not have considered. A good agency will explore these issues in depth and assist you to ensure it is the right decision and the right time.







# Choosing the right agency

It will come as no great surprise that quality organisations reflect the quality people that work and develop them.

# Local authorities

Through our foster placements we aim to improve the outcomes for all those in our care by providing them with the stability, education and matching that is so necessary to give children and young people better life chances.

What are your first impressions of the welcome you receive?

Are your questions and concerns answered fully and with clarity?

How comfortable do you feel at each stage of the process with both the people and ethos?

Is the agency well structured, organised, professional and knowledgeable?

Are they honest, open and realistic with the capacity to work at your pace?

Are they positioned to offer you close support and how is this delivered?

Do they have a good reputation?

Is there access to current carers who can share their experiences of the agency?

Do they share and ignite your passion for fostering?

Are they working closely with a range of local authorities through regular arrangements?

Remember that it’s the local authorities that commission the services of the agency you are considering. Be wise – get a feel for a couple of agencies, as it helps to make some informed comparisons.

## A CHILD IN MIND?

When people first consider fostering, they often have a perception of the type of child that may fit into their family or who they would like to help. Sometimes they create a picture of what fostering will actually be like. If you are thinking of younger children or teenagers or sibling groups, it is helpful to know if the agency regularly places children of this type. This also gives you a sense as to how long you may wait for a placement.

The broader the range of children you feel able to foster, the greater scope there is for placing a child or children with you. During the assessment, significant time is devoted to exploring what kind of child would match with your family. You may be surprised and your initial thoughts may change.

Fusion Fostering is used by Local Authorities throughout the UK and is an accredited member of a number of placement databases throughout the UK having several Commissioning Partnerships with Local Authorities.

All of our policies and procedures are verified by the several partnerships we have. We are the first choice for certain Local Authorities based on our reputation and service delivery that we have built up.

Fusion Fostering is regulated by Ofsted and our latest report stated that the Fostering Service offered a ‘Good service’.

Ofsted states...

“

Fusion Fostering are an agency where children and young people, including those with the most complex needs, have their individual needs met and their welfare safeguarded and promoted. They make good progress and receive effective services so they achieve as well as they can in all areas of their lives.

”



# Fostering Service Placements

Fusion Fostering is registered with Ofsted, and can approve foster carers to look after children from 0-18 years old.

There is a national shortage of foster carer’s for children between the ages of 10 to 15 years old and at Fusion Fostering we aim to recruit and offer services that meet the demands of the Local Authorities.

At Fusion Fostering we pride ourselves in identifying the closest match when children and young people are referred to us to be placed in our foster care.

The different types of placements needed are:

### Teenagers

Most of these children will have had difficulties at home. They come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds.

### Sibling Group

There are times where siblings should be kept together.

### Parent and Child

Offer a home to a baby or young child together with its parent to offer guidance and help in parenting. This is usually for a period for between 12-24 weeks and often requires foster carers to assess the level of the child’s parents skills in parenting. We have an experienced supervising social worker who is able to carry out parent & child assessments on behalf of the Local Authority.

### Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People

Young people who are deemed to be unaccompanied asylum seekers where their residency status within the UK is yet to be determined.

### Solo Placements

Involve high levels of supervision and support of a child or young person with considerable needs, which would preclude the placement of another foster child. This placement can be of an emergency, short term or long term duration.

### Long-term

Not all children who need to permanently live away from their birth family want to be adopted, so instead they go into long-term foster care until they are adults.

### Short-term

When carers look after children for a few weeks or months, while plans are made for the child’s future.

### Respite

Temporary care for a child or young person. This can be a child internally or externally placed, either to support a foster carer or parent.



## Finance

The support package offered by Fusion Fostering includes several benefits:

- Generous financial allowances for the child and carer. A foster carers status is self employed - which attracts tax breaks.
- 24 hour support
- The opportunity to gain qualifications
- Regular training
- 14 days paid annual leave (accrued whilst children are placed)

### Tax Benefits

Fosters carers are treated as self-employed and the Government has introduced a tax exemption for foster carers, which are made up of two parts.

- (a) Fixed amount of £10,000 (if approved for a whole tax year)
- (b) Additional amount per child – which depends on the child’s age and the number of weeks in placement
- (i) If child is 0-10 years £200 per week
- (ii) If child is 11-18 years £250 per week

This is taken from the Fostering Network Website [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net).

Please note that it is recommended that you take independent advice on your own tax position and check the HMRC website for the latest allowances.

### Fostering Allowances

Fusion Fostering pays an allowance to cover the general costs associated with looking after the child / children e.g. pocket money, activities, mileage and clothing.

The allowance below includes the carers reward allowance.

	Allowance £/Week
Standard	£400 - £450
Complex	£450 - £600
Parent & Child	£700 - £800







# Training & Fostering Panel

## Training

**At Fusion Fostering we recognise that fostering has become increasingly demanding and complex. We are committed to providing good quality training that is accessible and relevant to all our foster carers whilst also developing specific, bespoke programmes developed to meet foster carers' identified developmental needs.**

The TSD (Training Support & Development) Standards sets and defines standards for all foster carers to meet. This forms the basis of training from induction through to on-going development. It links into the requirements of the National Minimum Standards 2011, the Children Act 1989 & 2004 and works towards the Five Outcomes, as detailed within Every Child Matters. It reinforces that foster carers have a key role in improving the life chances of children who are Looked After, especially by providing stability and helping children to achieve at school.

The pre-approval/appointment training is based on the Fostering Network's 'Skills to Foster' model and incorporates the TSD induction training. Supervising Social Workers are always on hand during this process to assist and help with any queries. Following on from this, carers have the opportunity to attain their level three Diploma in child care.

We offer a range of foster carer training events and courses, as well as training opportunities on specialist topics, so our carers can continue to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to help develop stable and secure attachments while building a professional portfolio of training and skills.

## Fostering Panel

**Fusion Fostering Service welcomes applications to foster from people from all backgrounds.**

It is the Fostering Service's view that no person has an automatic right to foster a child as the best interests of the young people will always take priority. Fusion Fostering has its own Fostering Panel for the approval, review, registration and de-registration of all carers. The Panel meets once a month and includes an experienced independent chair, health practitioner, education professional, ex-service user and registered Social Workers all of whom play a crucial role in the process of approving and reviewing foster carers.

We believe that the exceptional level of support, full training programme, generous reward allowances and paid annual leave provision all add up to enabling us to provide a fostering service that is professional and appreciated by those who deliver and purchase our service

## Quality Assurance

**Fusion Fostering recognise that it is important to have in place a quality assurance system that has arrangements for self-assessment that is committed to assuring and improving the quality of care provided.**

**Fusion Fostering Service holds, as its care value, the desire to promote children's rights whilst ensuring organisational regulatory compliance. This means that children in placement will be safe, secure and looked after to a high standard.**

Fusion Fostering Service's quality assurance strategy is to create a service and environment where children have good relationships with their carers and staff who work within the fostering service, so they can develop a level of trust and experience good continuity of care.

Fusion Fostering has developed its own unique quality assurance system that is effective and efficient in its delivery. The quality assurance process seeks to engage in self-evaluation surveys, questionnaires, unannounced and announced monitoring visits and target audits.

This means that Fusion Fostering is committed to having as its objective, a quality service which is outcome based, enabling the meeting of standards determined by Ofsted, Commissioning Teams and Placing Authorities.

A key component of the quality assurance process is its link to improvement and customer satisfaction surveys and positive inspection findings.

## Stability for looked after children

**No other single issue is more important in improving outcomes for children in a family placement than stability.**

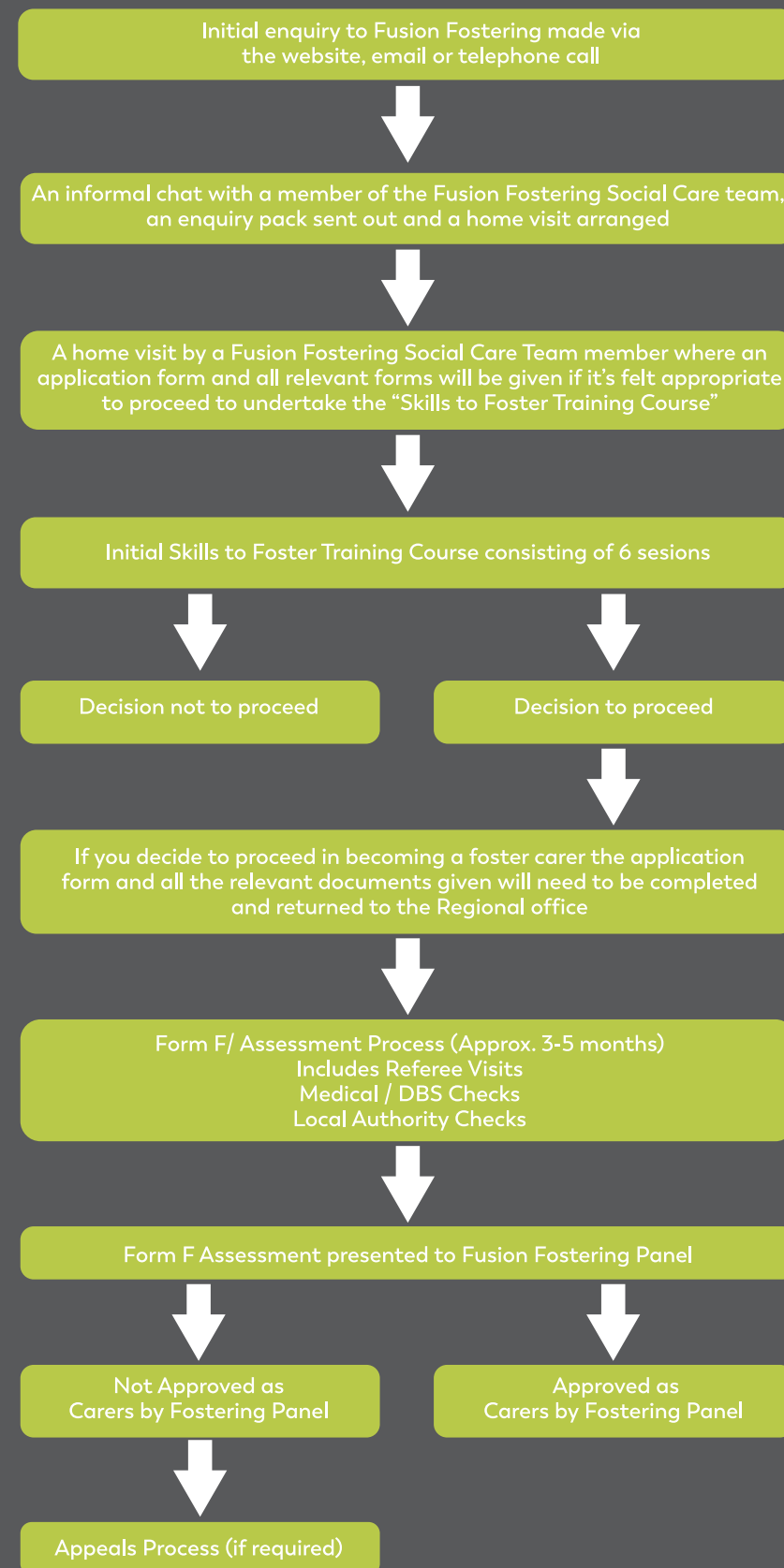
We recognise the significant role foster families play in supporting emotional and behavioural needs; this is often a highly challenging and complex process. The impact can be great and supervising social workers have a responsibility to collate and help carers to identify patterns of behaviour, incidents, revision of practice and outcomes.

By offering children and young people a consistent, stable and happy place to live, a sense of belonging and the opportunity to experience positive parental role models, Fusion Fostering has earned an exceptional reputation with many placing Local Authorities.





# Process for Applicants



The process will be explained in more detail during the Skills to Foster Training Course but if you would like to ask any questions please feel free to contact us on 03301 239355



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Can I foster if I am single?

Fostering is a life choice open to anyone who is able to demonstrate that they have the capacity and skills to look after someone else's child safely within their home.

### How long does the process take to become a Foster Carer?

On average three to five months providing all checks and your home assessment has been completed satisfactorily.

### I am over 55 - Am I too old?

There is no age limit to fostering. You will be required to undertake a medical assessment via your GP to ensure that you are physically and emotionally fit enough to undertake the task of fostering.

### Do I have to have a spare bedroom?

Yes, all placed children must have their own bedroom, unless a sibling group and this still needs to be agreed through the children's social worker.

### Do I receive any training once approved?

Yes. We offer a broad training programme along with childcare related qualifications. As part of your assessment prior to becoming approved as a foster carer you will be required to undertake 6 sessions of 'skills to foster' training as part of your induction to fostering.

### How long will a child be in placement?

It will all depend on the individual plan of the child placed in your care. Some children need a foster family until they leave school. Some children have time limited placements which is in line with their care plan. Some children are placed on a respite basis. You will be aware of each child's individual needs and duration of stay.

### Will I know who the child will be before they are placed?

Yes, prior to it being agreed that a child will be placed in your care, Fusion Fostering will share all information with you and discuss if the child is an appropriate match for you. Although some children are required to be placed in an emergency, the ideal is that every child is placed following introductions.

### Would previous convictions prevent me from fostering?

A previous criminal conviction would not necessarily disqualify you from fostering, it would depend upon the nature of the conviction and when it occurred. It is standard for us to do a DBS check so we would need you to discuss any convictions with us as soon as possible so that we could decide whether or how it might affect your application. This information would remain confidential at all times.