

Fostering Hearts' guide to fostering

**Can you change
a child's life for
the better?**



For more information call us
on 01442 953 123 or email
info@fosteringhearts.co.uk

Hi, If you're reading this, you're probably thinking about becoming a foster carer, which is great news.

There is currently a big shortage of foster carers across Hertfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. You could be just the person or family that a foster child or young person needs.



I'm Linda, the founder of Fostering Hearts (FH) and I along with our recruitment team (pictured below), created this short guide to explain what fostering is, and how you can become a carer

Hello there, we're GLF's recruitment and community officers. That means it's our job to talk to people thinking about fostering. Through hundreds of conversations, we've come up with the top 5 questions that people ask.

These are:

1. What is fostering?
2. Can I foster?
3. How do I become a foster carer?
4. What support will I receive?
5. Why foster with Fostering Hearts?



If you need any more information, don't hesitate to contact us by phone, email or on Facebook.

We also have lots more information on our website

www.fosteringhearts.co.uk

The Maylands Building
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP2 7TG

Tel: 01442 953123

Email: info@fosteringhearts.co.uk





1. What is fostering?

Fostering is about continuing a family life for a child or young person when they can no longer live with their birth family.

Foster children may stay a few days, a few months or occasionally for many years. Children come into care for a range of reasons but there are many that have experienced abuse and neglect.

These experiences often affect their behaviour and ability to trust people, so it is vital that foster carers be patient and understanding.

An important part of a carer's role is to support children with their education, learning and prepare them for independence.

Foster carers work as part of a team, so you will have a supervising social worker who is there to support, supervise and empower you.

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2. Can I foster?

A lot of people that contact us to become foster carers worry that they won't be eligible.

They often think that their living situation, employment or relationship status will be an obstacle, but they are often mistaken.

We need carers from all backgrounds as long as you:

- Are committed to helping children and young people to reach their potential
- Do not have any criminal convictions against children or of a sexual nature.
- Are over 21
- Have at least 1 spare bedroom
- And have permanent residency in the UK.

After talking to you, and meeting you via video call, we'll be able to make a final decision about whether we think you have the skills, experience and time to be a foster carer.

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3. How do I become a foster carer?

There is an application process which all potential foster carers have to go through, regardless of who you choose to foster for;



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4. What support will I get?

Every fostering agency will offer you a different level of support. These are some of the things we offer our foster carers:

A supervising social worker. It's their job to work directly with you, normally this means a monthly visit, and weekly check in phone calls. If you need them more (especially when starting out) they will be there for you.

An emergency line which is answered 24/7, in case your supervisor is unavailable

A great financial package:
£490 for children aged 11 and over
£462 for children under 11
You may also receive more for taking children with more complex needs – up to £625 per week.

Lots of events during the year to entertain you and the children. For instance; trips to the zoo, bowling and foster carer meals out.

An extensive training programme, which ensures you have the right skills to be a confident foster carer.

Local and virtual support groups - which helps you connect with other foster carers, giving you informal peer support.

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5. Why Fostering Hearts?

Choosing who you foster for is a very important decision, and one you should spend some time thinking about.

The first choice you will have to make is whether you foster for an independent agency (like Fostering Hearts), or for a local authority.

Both have their advantages, but the reason we founded Fostering Hearts was that we felt we could better support carers and children outside the constraints of the government.

We think we can better focus on what really matters, our foster carers and children, by being an independent agency. Therefore, we can make decisions quickly with minimum bureaucracy, which means introducing new ideas.

For example, we have a team committed to promoting positive aspirations of the young people we care for - the Positive Aspirations Taskforce, who ensure that we encourage and support all our young people's aspirations no matter how small or large they may be.

Ultimately, the thing that sets Fostering Hearts apart is that we're a community. With over 20 years of experience to share, we know fostering isn't easy so we support our carers every step of the way.

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Want more info?

There is only so much information we could put in this guide, but we realise you need a lot more before deciding whether fostering is right for you.

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Our website also has answers to hundreds of questions.

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