



# **Fostering Changes Life Enquiry Pack**



## About Us

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We are a small independent Fostering organisation based in the Rossendale Valley where we cover and operate across the North West region. We pride ourselves on having a child focused approach to fostering.

At Fostering Changes Life we understand the importance of building and maintaining meaningful relationships between our foster carers, staff members and most importantly, young people and children.

We employ a variety of individuals who have a wealth of social work, management, teaching, administration, ex fostering and technical experience. All staff receive regular support, supervision and training including DBS checks.

We at Fostering Changes Life recognise that the children and young people we support come from a diversity of background's, culture and experience and therefore we embrace diversity amongst our Foster Carers.

We work in partnership with Local Authorities across the North West of England to provide the best possible standard of care for children and young people. We are regulated and registered by Ofsted and we have a Foster carer charter.

We are seeking to recruit foster carers across all areas of our provision in the North west including but not limited to:

Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire, West Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Cumbria.





## What is Fostering?

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Fostering is about providing a safe and caring home for a child or young person when they are unable to live with their own family.

Children come into foster care for many reasons. It may not be safe for them to remain with their families as they may be at risk from harm, abuse or neglect.

Foster care provides a safe, secure and stable environment for the child whilst their needs are assessed and decisions about their future are made.

Fostering Changes Life recognise the decision to foster is one of the biggest life changes that you will make.

Fostering is a demanding and skilled task which requires skills and qualities. You will require commitment to develop and continue learning. Becoming a foster carer is a lifestyle choice that needs to include the whole family. It is very rewarding as well as challenging.



# Who Can Foster?

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Here at Fostering Changes Life we believe that there is no typical foster carer. Being a foster carer isn't about your marital status or your sexual orientation nor is it about your Ethnicity or religious beliefs.

Previous experience of working with or looking after children would be helpful in becoming a foster carer however, it is not necessary and certainly won't exclude applicants.

What you can offer a child is what matters. At Fostering Changes Life we actively promote diversity and welcome applications from all members of the community.

But for us to make sure the children and young people are safe and secure it is important that our foster carers meet several requirements, you will need to:

- Have the skills, abilities, and individual talents to work with children in a positive way which enables them to reach their potential and feel loved.
- Promote well-being and keep children/young people safe.
- Share a sense of humour and have fun with children/young people.
- Have resilience.
- Be available and flexible to care for the child.
- Need to attend all meetings regarding the child whilst transporting and supporting them to school and appointments.
- Be over 21 years of age.
- Flexible, resourceful, and able to use your own initiative.
- Respectful of individual differences.
- Able to work as part of a team.
- Prepared for and understand that the fostering task can be challenging.
- Be committed to learning and development
- Able to provide a spare room for the sole use of fostering.



# What Support/Finance can I expect?

- You will be allocated your own Supervising Social Worker who will provide support and supervision to you through regular home visits and phone calls.
- Out of hour telephone service 24 hours per day for advice and guidance on crisis or emergency situations
- Support groups and social events with other carers
- Regular training
- 14-21 days respite

Foster Carers are treated as self-employed and the Government has introduced a **tax exemption** for Foster Carers, this can be found at the [www.Fostering.net](http://www.Fostering.net)

Fixed amount of £10,000 over and above your personal tax allowance (if approved for a whole tax year)

Additional amount per child, if child is 0-10 years £200 per week, if child is 11-18 years £250 per week.

Level	Fostering Experience	Respite	Carer Paymet
Foundation	Up to 2 years	14 days	£400
Level 1	2-5 years	14 days	£450
Level 2	5 years plus	21 days	£500

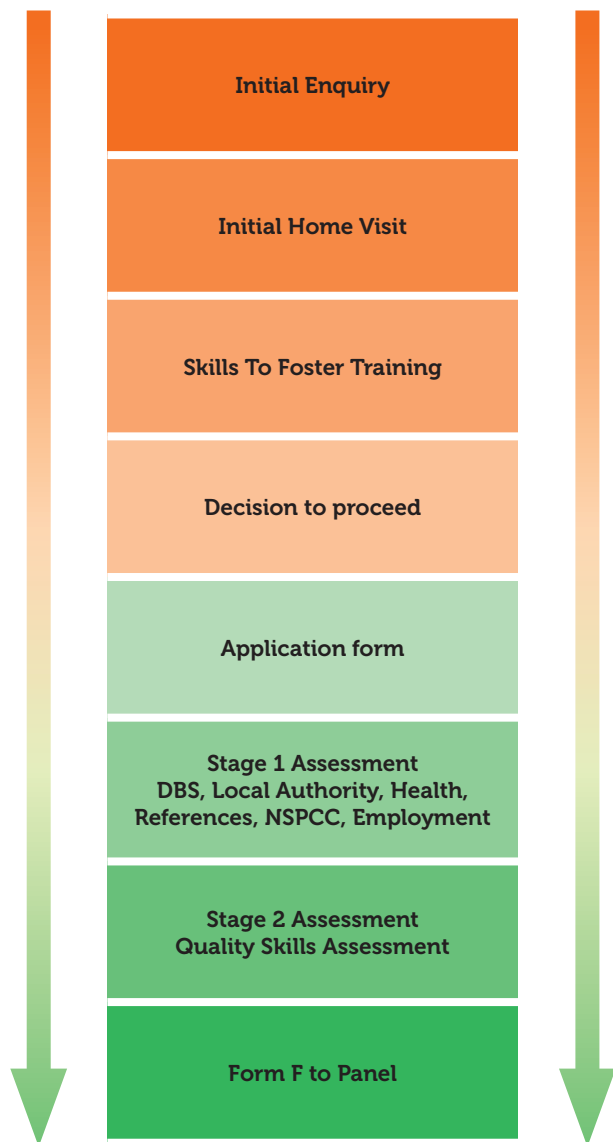
We pay enhanced fess for solo placements and when the local authority places a child who they deem to have additional needs and complexities at an enhanced rate.

Parent and child placements rates range from £695-£895 depending on experience and complexities.



# The Recruitment Process

## Process Flow Chart



## Your steps to becoming a Foster Carer with Fostering Changes Life.

The journey from application to placement and beyond is an in-depth process that all applicants are required to go through in order to become an approved foster carer with Fostering Changes Life.

Whilst this may seem daunting, the process is to ensure that only the right people are approved as foster carers to care for looked after young people. We will be here to guide you through this process.

**Enquiry and Initial Visit:** once you have made your initial enquiry we will arrange an informal chat with a member of Fostering Changes Life team. They will have a brief conversation with you about becoming a foster carer and will explain the criteria for being able to apply. If you meet the initial criteria we will arrange a convenient time to come and complete an initial visit.

The initial visit takes around two hours it provides us with further information and assesses your suitability to proceed.

**Skills to Foster:** Following the initial visit and your suitability to proceed, we will invite you to attend Skills to foster training. The training is part of the assessment process and the trainers will provide feedback which will be considered as part of your assessment. At this stage we will ask you to complete an application form. Once this has been completed and you are considered able to proceed then you will be assigned an assessor.

**Fostering Assessment (Form F Assessment):** At this stage Fostering Changes Life will assign you a named qualified social worker to carry out an assessment with you and your family.

For couples, both applicants will have to undergo the fostering assessment, checks and training, as both applicants will need to be approved as foster carers before they can foster children.



# The Recruitment Process (cont)

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The assessment is split into two stages, stage one and stage two.

As part of stage one assessment we will carry out a series of statutory checks and information gathering.

Stage two of the assessment the qualified social worker will carry out several visits to your home in order to work with you and your family to gather further information in order to compile your assessment and portfolio. The assessment is a joint project and required full participation from you and your family to ascertain suitability to become a foster carer.

Once your Form F Assessment has been completed your social worker will make recommendation about your suitability to be approved and the terms of approval. i.e. gender, numbers of children etc.

**Panel:** your Form F assessment and all statutory and non-statutory checks will then be submitted to an independent fostering panel for consideration. You will be invited to attend the panel. The fostering panel comprises of professionals and independent members with professional and personal experience of fostering.

You will have the opportunity to provide further information and ask any questions you may have at this meeting. The fostering panel will then deliberate and decide on the day whether to recommend you for approval. Panel recommendation will then go to the Agency decision maker who will make the final decision to ratify approval.

**Approval:** following your approval as a foster carer you will be allocated your own Supervising Social Worker who will begin your induction working closely with you to match your skills with the needs of children referred to us. You are now ready to begin your fostering Career!



# Placement Types

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There are different types of placements for foster carers. Fostering changes Life will provide advice, support and recommendations on which placements may be suitable to you and your family.

## **Short Term**

Short term foster carers provide temporary placements for children and can mean anything from a couple of days up to two years.

## **Long Term**

Long term placements provide long term care for a child with their foster carers until adulthood or independence where adoption is not an option.

## **Respite**

Respite care is the provision of a time limited placement, either whilst main carers are on holiday or temporarily unavailable. Respite can also be offered as part of an ongoing care plan.







## Placement Types

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### **Emergency**

Emergency placements are often with limited warning when the child needs a placement on that day or night. The duration of the placement is often not known and plans may be undecided. Often there is very limited information about the child upon placement.

### **Solo**

Solo placements require experienced and resilient foster carers who can meet the needs of more challenging children/young people.

### **Sibling placements**

Sibling placements enable large groups of siblings to remain together in foster care. Foster carers who provide sibling placements will need to be able to meet each child's individual need.

### **Parent and Child**

This is a specialist type of fostering which involves a parent and child living with the foster family. The foster carer will offer parental advice, guidance and support to the parent.

### **Bridging placements**

Bridging placements are a short term, flexible placement, often used to ensure a positive a child has a positive transition from one placement to another.

### **Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers**

Foster carers provide a placement for children/ young people who are deemed to be unaccompanied asylum seekers where their status within the UK is not yet to be determined.



## Working as part of a team

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- To work together in attending and actively partaking in all meetings associated with the needs and care plans of the child whilst promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the child.
- To work with the National Fostering Standards and agencies policies and procedures
- To maintain and keep safe and secure a written record of the child in placement and contribute to progress and assessment reports.
- To deal with confidential information in a responsible manner.
- To undertake relevant training and development opportunities and recognise the importance of continued development and learning.
- To act responsibly and within the agency guidelines regarding the sharing of information.
- At Fostering Changes Life we are a team who are available 24/7. We promote an inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and has confidence in one another to ask for support and help.





## Training Programme

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It is a requirement that foster carers attend regular training and development opportunities and continually update their practice.

Fostering Changes Life will provide a comprehensive training package including skills to foster, mandatory training and TSDS. You will also be given the opportunity to complete specific training relevant to caring for the young person you have placed and your individual need.

Fostering Changes Life provide excellent quality training which includes: face to face training, group training and access to our online foster carer training hub.

# Qualities of a successful Foster Carer

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Foster caring is a highly skilled and dedicated role. At Fostering Changes Life, we will provide the support guidance and training to help you achieve this.

Being a foster carer means welcoming and caring for someone else's child in your own home, whilst not being the child's legal guardian, understanding they have different needs and expectations.

Knowing that each child is individual and there may be stressful situations where their own needs and feelings are to be met. Embracing the changes that fostering will bring to your family.

Being able to support the child at school, building good relationships with the teachers and all other professionals.

Having an overall positive approach whilst being able to understand and recognise the child's behaviour and how it has been affected from past experiences.

Protect and keep the child safe but also ensure that they are taught how to obtain help if needed.

Be supportive and support them to attend contact and any healthcare or other appointments.

As a family lead a healthy lifestyle whilst having fun, this will increase confidence and self-esteem in the child and you as a family.

Foster care provides a safe, secure and stable environment to enable a child's needs to be assessed to allow decisions to be made regarding their future.

Support the child when any decisions are made that might include the child returning to their birth family, longer term care, adoption or residential care.







## Key Principle Duties and Responsibilities Caring for Children

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- To provide consistent care whilst having regard to the needs of children.
- Enhance children's lives by providing them with new social experiences and hobbies.
- To participate in the implementation of the child's care plan, including specific tasks.
- Provide a range of experiences, activities and opportunities for children and young people.
- To encourage the healthy growth and development of the child/young person, with emphasis on health and education achievement. Ensuring that the children you care for are registered with a doctor, dentist and any other relevant services.
- To ensure that children looked after are encouraged to have a positive understanding of their background, religion and culture and language.
- To provide care in an anti-discriminatory way which promotes and values diversity and prepares the child for life in a multi-cultural society.
- To prepare and assist a child with independent skills that will enable them to move onto independence or adulthood.
- To positively prepare and support a child who is moving on to alternative foster carers or returning to their family.
- To comply with Fostering Changes Life's policies and procedures whilst striving to achieve best practice.
- To provide appropriate boundaries for the child to guide their behaviour and self-identity, including sexual behaviour and identity.





## What we provide and do differently

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- Regular support groups
- Regular newsletter for children
- Special occasion cards and gifts
- Celebratory events
- Children's Savings from FCL
- Children's counsel
- Online Jellybaby system for all recordings
- Achievement rewards
- 24 hour support

Use of a caravan at Ribby Hall Village [www.ribbyhall.co.uk](http://www.ribbyhall.co.uk)



# Frequently asked Questions

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## Can I foster if I'm single?

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

## How long does it take to be an approved carer?

From the point of your initial enquiry we aim for you to be a foster carer within 6-8 months. This allows plenty of time for reflection and for you to carefully consider the decision to become a carer.

## I'm claiming benefits; will this stop me from fostering?

No. You would have to declare your fostering income. This may impact on what benefits you receive, however not in all cases.

## Who would I be employed by?

You would be self-employed and therefore responsible for paying your tax and national insurance. All our foster carers will have access to advice regarding this through Fostering Network.

## I have recently retired and want to foster, is this a problem?

Your age is not a barrier to become a foster carer. All we ask is that you are fit and healthy and able to look after the children who are in your care.

## Can I be a foster carer even though I have a previous conviction?

Depending on the kind of previous conviction that you may have, this is not a barrier to becoming a foster carer. All foster carers must undertake an Enhanced DBS check, we ask you to be honest about whether there is anything which is on your record. Should there be anything on your record then a risk assessment will be undertaken.

## I don't have any children, is this an issue?

It doesn't matter if you don't have children of your own, we will need you to demonstrate that you are able to provide a caring home and to be able to care for children to our expected standards. You can demonstrate your relevant childcare experience through looking after family members, working with children and young people or volunteering. We can consider many options of caring for children and young people, what is important is that you can show us your potential to be a foster carer.

## Does it matter if I identify with a certain gender or sex?

Diversity is key to meeting the needs of our children and young people.

## We have a spare bedroom, is this enough?

Every child and young person must be provided with their own bedroom which is their own space. The bedroom must be able to fit in a bed, set of drawers and a wardrobe. If you do not already have this then this is something which you must work towards having before a child may come to live with you.

## Will you provide any training?

Absolutely! After your initial Skills To Foster, we have a range of courses which will ultimately help you on your professional journey as a foster carer. The courses will develop your awareness and understanding of fostering covering topics such as: safeguarding, safer caring, first aid, de-escalation, behaviour management etc. You must also complete the TSDs which is a national standard for foster carers.

# What now?

If you feel fostering is for you, please get in touch with us at:

**Email:** Info@fcl.care

**Website:** [www.fosteringchangeslife.co.uk](http://www.fosteringchangeslife.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 0330 133 0706

