

FOSTERING ROTHERHAM



INFORMATION GUIDE

ABOUT FOSTERING

We believe that children and young people in Rotherham should grow up with the right conditions to allow them to be healthy, safe and achieve their potential in life.



What do foster carers do?

Foster carers come from all walks of life and not all fostering journeys are the same. A foster carer may be there to house a child in an emergency or they may foster a child for a longer period through some of the most important moments of their life.

Foster carers provide day-to-day care for children and young people supporting their educational, health and social wellbeing. All foster carers receive training before being approved to foster, giving them the skills and tools to enable them to meet the needs of a child in their care.

That's why we are looking for people who, with compassionate guidance and support, can help us to provide these conditions for children and young people in care. We call these amazing people foster carers. Fostering provides a home and more stable family life for children and young people who can no longer be cared for by their parents. There are many different types of fostering depending on the needs of the child or young person. There are many reasons why children are placed into care and it is our job to find them safe, supportive and caring homes with foster carers.

“We feel proud every time someone asks us what we do and we say we’re a fostering family”.

— Andrea, foster carer

Who can become a foster carer?

In order to care for a diverse range of foster children, our foster carers must be equally diverse. We have foster carers from a huge range of ages, faiths, ethnicities and cultures. You don't need any special qualifications to be a foster carer and it doesn't matter whether you are employed, unemployed, married, single or divorced, the most important thing is that you have the capacity to care for someone else's child. There is no such thing as a typical foster carer and we assess all applications on an individual basis. If you are aged 21 or over, have a spare bedroom and live within 20 miles of Rotherham — you can apply to become a foster carer with Fostering Rotherham.

TYPES OF FOSTERING

Task Centred Foster Care

Task centred foster care, also known as short-term foster care, can range from a one night stay to a period of several months while the local authority assesses what the best next steps are for the child's future care. Short term foster care is the ideal solution for children in our care who need a temporary place to stay before returning to their families or into longer-term fostering or adoption. As a short-term foster carer, you still have access to all of the same training and support that our long-term foster carers do and the application process is the same.

Long-Term Foster Care

If children are not able to go back to their own families for an extended period of time, long-term fostering offers children a more stable home, often lasting until they are 18 and older. Placement stability is key for the development of many foster children and can be equally rewarding for the foster family. Sometimes a child requires a long term placement and a match is identified at the outset. In other cases, a child may be placed as a short term placement and the care plan then becomes long term.



Emergency Foster Care

Emergency foster carers are prepared to take a child into their home at any time, usually for a few days. This type of fostering may be offered if a single parent with no immediate support network is taken ill and there is nobody to care for the child. Similarly to short term foster care, this is temporary while the local authority assesses the child's future care. A great deal of flexibility from our foster carers is required as once you have agreed to a placement the child will quickly be placed with you.

Children with additional needs

There are children in our care of all ages who have needs that require higher levels of carer skill and experience. These children may have physical disabilities, additional educational needs or challenging behaviours. To foster a child with additional needs, foster carers in Rotherham can become a part of Foster Plus. Foster Plus carers undergo specialist training to gain the skills and knowledge to carry out therapeutic parenting. Foster Plus carers will receive higher financial support and cannot be in additional employment whilst being a foster carer.

Second Home Care

Second Home Care, also known as Respite Care is short term care that allows foster children some time away from their foster carers in order to have new experiences with foster carers that are familiar to them, like a second family.

“Our social worker is brilliant. She knows us well and has always been there for us.”

— Sarah, foster carer

GETTING STARTED

The Application Process

We believe that becoming a foster carer is an amazing and rewarding experience. We also understand it is a big decision and if you are ready to apply, our expert fostering team are on hand to support you every step of the way.

Our application process is broken up into three stages: application, assessment and support. The length of the application process can vary from carer to carer and is designed to ensure the best possible outcome for you, your family and the children we support.

However you choose to get in touch with us, via our website, email, telephone, social media or at an event, you will be in contact with our fostering team who can discuss any initial questions you might have. When you are ready to take the next step and meet with one of our fostering team, you can book a fostering information visit. With this information we will need to carry out some basic background checks which are routinely carried out with all potential foster carers to support the next stage of the application process. The information visit is a chance for us to tell you a bit more about the amazing benefits of fostering in Rotherham and for you to ask any questions you might have.



1. Application

In order to start the application process, we will need to meet any other members of your household

to make sure that they understand what fostering is and to answer any questions they have. At the end of your home visit your visiting fostering advisor will supply you with a Rotherham Foster Carer Application Form to complete in your own time. You will need to provide work, family and personal references as part of this stage of the application and we will use your application form to carry out medical and statutory checks with the local authority and the safeguarding board, and run a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.



2. Assessment

You will be assigned your own personal social worker who you will meet you regularly to get to know you better as well as your family and your extended support network. They will also help you complete any necessary paperwork required during the assessment stage. You will be invited to attend one of our Skills to Foster training courses. This is led by our Fostering Team and existing local foster carers who are there to share their experiences with you openly and honestly.



3. Support

Towards the end of the assessment period, your personal social worker will work with you to complete

a Fostering Assessment report. You will have full visibility of the report and can add your own feedback and comments. You will then be invited to attend a Fostering Panel where your personal social worker's assessment and recommendations are discussed. This usually takes no longer than 30 minutes and you will be asked a few questions. You will be told at the Fostering Panel whether or not your application has been recommended for approval and passed to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) to make a final decision. Once you're approved as a foster carer, you will receive a welcome pack and be allocated a supervising social worker. You will then begin your induction into our amazing network of Rotherham foster carers.



“Throughout the process we felt supported and no question was left unanswered.”

— Janine, foster carer



MONEY MATTERS

We believe that fostering can be transformative to the lives of children and young people as well as incredibly rewarding for foster carers themselves. We know that people become foster carers for a variety of reasons and although money might not be your first concern, it is important that potential foster carers understand the fees and allowances available so that you can budget for your family's outgoings.

On average foster carers in Rotherham earn £428 per week. However, the actual amount you will earn depends on a few things like how many children you have on placement in your home, their ages and other factors that are based on the needs of the children in placement.

To make it easy to understand, Fostering Rotherham pay our foster carers an all inclusive weekly amount, this payment is made up of two parts:



Example one

Becky is a foster carer with one foster child, aged 3. She is a Level One skilled carer. Every week, Becky receives:

- £133.54 per week Basic Allowance
- £100 per week Foster Carer Fee

Total £233.54 per week



Example two

Adam and Chris are Level Two skilled foster carers with two foster children aged 5 and 8. Every week they receive:

- £304.24 per week Basic Allowance
- £250 per week Foster Carer Fee

Total £554.24 per week

The foster carer fee

This is sometimes referred to as a 'skills payment' but basically this is the fee we pay to foster carers for doing the amazing job they do day after day. Again this fee can vary based on the qualifications and skills foster carers acquire over time.

A fostering allowance

This is a payment to cover the living costs associated with having a child such as food, clothing, pocket money and activities. The amount of allowance you get for a child varies depending on how old they are and how many children you care for.

There are also some additional payments a foster carer will receive once a year at different times to cover things like birthdays, Christmas or other religious celebrations. Here are some examples of what a foster carer with Fostering Rotherham might receive:



Example three

Sally is a Level Three skilled foster carer with a foster child aged 11. Every week Sally receives:

- £175 per week Basic Allowance
- £189.37 per week Foster Carer Fee

Total £364.37 per week



Example four

Sarah and John are foster carers with two foster children aged 11 and 16. He is a Level Four skilled carer. Every week Sarah and John receive:

- £419.67 per week Basic Allowance
- £720 Foster Carer fee

Total £1139.67 per week

TRAINING

As part of the application process, you will be given all the training you need to begin caring for a foster child, but this is by no means where your learning stops. As well as the ongoing training to progress through our skills levels, you'll be able to identify other opportunities for learning with your supervising social worker based on what you're most interested in.



You have already completed the Skills to Foster course, and now as a newly approved foster carer, you'll receive the Level One fostering fee. It is absolutely fine to remain a Level One carer but many of our carers decide to progress through the skill levels. Some of the first topics you will cover include:

- Induction • First aid • Safer care • Equality and diversity • Record keeping



After you have completed your Level One training and have one year's experience as a foster carer, you can start to work towards qualifying as a Level Two carer. Level Two's training modules include practical knowledge that will help to enhance your day to day knowledge in your foster care journey and enable you to get the most out of your role.

- Understanding behaviour • Attachment
- Understanding Foster care



Level Three is designed to equip our carers to confidently care for children with more complex needs and to support the wider fostering community in Rotherham. You can become a Level Three carer once you have two years' experience as a foster carer in Rotherham. The focus of your training and development will be:

- Advanced Safeguarding • Therapeutic parenting
- Supporting new foster carers



Level Four carers undergo specialist training to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to carry out therapeutic parenting for children and young people with additional needs. Level 4 covers a wide range of needs but the focus is on physically and emotionally supporting the child in your care who, for example, may have:

- Life limiting illness • Illness requiring treatment
- Entered the care system later





SUPPORT

At Fostering Rotherham, we are incredibly proud of our wider support network for Foster Carers. Our foster carers and children have access to 24/7 support from our team and a dedicated therapeutic team to help you navigate any specific needs you or your foster child may have.

At Fostering Rotherham we strive to provide you with everything you might need for your foster care journey. Some of the most valuable support you receive will be from fellow Rotherham foster carers. There are lots of ways to reach peer support such as through the Foster Carers' Association, local and national events and even Facebook groups, all of which improve the stability of fostering placements and strengthen relationships between foster children and their foster families.

The Mockingbird Family Model

In the Mockingbird Family Model, foster carers are part of a group with other foster carers who are described as satellite foster homes. They are supported by an experienced foster carer called a 'hub' home carer who provides support to the satellite homes. The group works like an extended family where children can make lasting relationships. We are setting up satellites across Rotherham.

"All the carers know each other and support one another and its working amazingly"

Anna and Andy - Existing Foster Carers

"The Mockingbird Hub is fantastic"

Steph - Existing Foster Carer

YOUR QUESTIONS

Here are five of the most frequently asked questions. If you have any more questions, you can find more information and contact us at www.fosteringrotherham.com.

Why do children go into foster care?

Each child in foster care will have a different story, but children come into our care because their birth families unfortunately aren't able to give them a happy and healthy life. It's not always an easy decision, so the needs of each child are thoroughly assessed before making a decision on whether to bring them into our care.

Some children might have experienced abuse or neglect, or some families might have a long-term illness, mental health, or addiction issue, which means that they can't properly look after their child all the time. It's our job to make sure that we can give each child the safe and supportive family they deserve — whether that means placing them with a foster carer full-time, or working alongside birth families to help them.



Do you only work with children from Rotherham?

Yes, we work hard to ensure that Rotherham's children are placed with Rotherham families and that their lives are disrupted as little as possible. We support children and families in a 20 miles radius of Rotherham.

“Every child we have looked after has paid us back tenfold in affection and left us with happy memories .”

— Lee, foster carer

YOUR QUESTIONS

What is the application process like?

In order to find safe and appropriate foster homes in Rotherham for the children in our care, there is an application process all potential foster carers must follow. However you choose to get in touch with us, via our website, email, telephone, social media or at an event, you will be in contact with our team of fostering advisers who can discuss any initial questions you might have.

When you are ready to take the next step and meet with one of our fostering advisers, you will be asked to complete a simple enquiry form which will capture some personal information about you, your current situation and your aspirations for fostering. With this information we will need to carry out some basic background checks which are routinely carried out with all potential foster carers to support the next stage of the application process. Our experienced team will support you through all three stages of the application process.

What makes a great foster carer?

Foster carers come from all walks of life and each bring their own strengths and personalities to their role in a foster child's life. There is no exact recipe for making the perfect foster carer, as long as they have the capacity to support and care for a foster child in a loving home with patience, openness and a good sense of humour.

When is the right time to foster?

Fostering a child has to be at the right time for you and your family. A lot of our foster carers have found that the right time for them came when they had some free time in their lives and space in their home. Many foster carers decide it's the right time for them when they want to spend more time at home with their own children or make a real difference in their community. At a fostering information visit, our fostering team will discuss all of this with you and are here to guide and support you through making the decision to foster.



REASONS TO FOSTER WITH FOSTERING ROTHERHAM



Be Part of Rotherham's Fostering Family

Choosing to welcome a foster child into your home is an amazing thing to do. By becoming a foster carer, you are not only changing a child's life but opening yourself up to a whole world of opportunity and fulfilment.

Support When You Need It

Our vast network of formal and informal support systems mean there is help available whenever you need it. You will have access to 24/7 helpline, dedicated social worker, an experienced therapeutic team plus local peer support groups including a local Fostering Association.



Training and Development

We are here to give you all of the tools you need to be a great foster carer. Whether you have worked with children for decades or have never cared for a child before, we can provide you with the training you need. Right from the very start of your fostering journey, we will work with you to build your skill level and gain valuable knowledge you can use both personally and professionally.

Financial Benefits

On average, our foster carers earn £428 a week. We know that people become foster carers for a variety of reasons and although money might not be your first concern, it is important that potential foster carers understand the fees and allowances available so that you can budget for your family's outgoings. There is also specific tax relief for foster carers that can mean that all, or the majority, of the fees paid to foster carers are tax exempt. There are also some great local discounts available for foster families to help you make the most of each day.

We understand that the right time to foster is different for everyone, so whether you think you might be ready to foster now or you have further questions for our team, please get in touch today.

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