

Fostering in Bedford Borough



Information pack

Could you be a fantastic
foster carer?



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Could you be a fantastic foster carer?

We have lots of fantastic foster carers in Bedford, but we also have lots of children who need to be cared for. So we are looking for people who think they could take on this very special role and offer a home to a child or young person.

What is fostering?

Fostering is when someone looks after a child or young person who is unable to stay with their own (birth) family for a variety of reasons. It could be for short period of time, or more long term, depending on the circumstances.



Who can foster?

Almost anyone can become a Foster Carer, and we are looking for a wide range. You can be:

- ✿ Single
- ✿ Married
- ✿ Same sex couple
- ✿ With or without children
- ✿ Working or not
- ✿ Must be over 21 years old
- ✿ Must have a spare bedroom to care for a child from the age of 3 years, **or**
- ✿ Have space in your bedroom for a child 0-2 years
- ✿ Have pets

Our Foster Carers reflect a wide range of circumstances and life experience and we assess every application on an individual basis.

Some experience in childcare would be useful, although not essential.



What are the types of Fostering?

There are several different types of fostering. You may find that you are more suited to a certain type because of your personal and professional circumstances.

Emergency Fostering is needed for situations where a child needs a foster home urgently, either for a night or for a few days.

Short term fostering is providing a child or young person with a place to stay until they can return to their own family, or until it becomes evident that they need a more permanent foster placement.



Long term fostering placements give a child or young person somewhere to live and grow until they reach maturity.

Respite foster care is a fostering placement for a limited time only. A respite foster carer cares for a child or young person and the respite period can benefit both the foster carer and the child by giving some 'respite' or a short break from usual circumstances.

A parent and child placement is where parents can be supported alongside their children within a foster family.



What skills do I need?

Some childcare experience would be useful, but not essential.

- ✿ Flexibility
- ✿ A sense of humour
- ✿ Resilience

If you go ahead with the assessment process, you may well discover that you have plenty of skills and experience that will be really beneficial as a Foster Carer.

We do ask that you are able to:

- ✿ Safeguard and care for the child/young person
- ✿ Encourage them to achieve their full potential
- ✿ Support existing hobbies and encourage new ones
- ✿ Support their friendships and encourage social skills
- ✿ Listen to them and act as an advocate
- ✿ Ensure contact arrangements are met
- ✿ Be part of the team
- ✿ Be committed to developing your own skills and knowledge
- ✿ Encourage their school attendance



What support do I get?

We want to make sure you are fully supported as a Foster Carer, therefore we provide:

- ✿ A Supervising Social Worker who will provide regular supervision
- ✿ A 'buddy' Foster Carer who can provide advice and guidance
- ✿ Regular training opportunities, including mandatory training
- ✿ Support groups where you can meet other Foster Carers and share experiences
- ✿ A regular newsletter
- ✿ Fostering allowances for the child/young person to cover costs whilst they are in your care
- ✿ A fee for you
- ✿ Kids Who Share activities for your own children, if you have them
- ✿ At Bedford Borough, we view foster carers as part of a professional team



I'm interested...

If you'd like to find out more about fostering, give us a call or email us. Staff can answer any questions you have to help you decide if you'd like to start the process.

 **01234 718718**

 **fostering@bedford.gov.uk**
