



Information Brochure

Your Guide to becoming a Foster Carer
and Understanding the Role





Why OwnLife Fostering?

- Our name reflects our aim which is to inspire the children and young people placed in our care to “own” and take control of their own lives”.
- Our carers deserve the same quality of life and we ensure this by giving them 24/7 support so that they, in turn, can support the children and young people in their care, and their own families at the same time.
- With OwnLife you get a personal service from a team of professionals you know.
- We support and encourage your personal and professional development by providing monthly training events.

Our commitment

- OwnLife Fostering is registered with Ofsted and is committed to working in partnership with **local authorities, other professionals and foster carers on the principle that the child's welfare is paramount.**
- Our recruitment, assessment and matching service is robust and thorough in order to achieve excellent outcomes for children and young people and a rewarding career for carers.
- Our carers are carefully chosen and trained. We empower them to encourage their foster child to be involved in all aspects of their own care and to be actively involved in identifying opportunities for personal development.
- Children and young people are offered a safe happy environment where they can flourish and develop their potential to the full thus enabling them to participate positively in society.
- There is a positive culture throughout the organisation to encourage disadvantaged children and young people to thrive emotionally and to develop resilience with the support of the foster carers entrusted with their care.
- We work **with our carers to maintain good family links in the interests of the child's overall development** (unless there is a child protection or other serious reasons not to).

What is Foster Care?

- Offering the chance of a stable family life for children and young people who are unable to live with their parents or other relatives
- Children can come into care at any age from 0-18. The background reason for being taken into care is different for each child or young person, however, the fact is that their birth parents have not been able to bring them up themselves
- Fostering can be challenging but also rewarding; fostering takes time, patience and commitment.
- Children and young people come from different cultural religious and ethnic backgrounds and will have different behaviours depending on their own experiences or disabilities.
- A fostered child may stay with you for a few days, or months or years. Some children return to their families and others will stay in foster care until they reach independence
- We want every child placed with us to stay as long as possible with the same family so as to avoid any further disruption in their lives.



Key Facts

The number and rate of children in care in the UK are increasing overall.

The NSPCC has produced a statistical briefing about looked after children, which looks at who are looked after children, what data is available to them, how the data can be used and what it tells us.

Findings Include that:

- Certain groups of children are more likely to be in care than others
- Abuse and neglect are the main reasons that children are taken into care
- Foster care is the most common placement type
- The most common reason for a child to leave care is to return to their family
- A number of looked after children experience multiple care placements in a year
- Children in care have below average outcomes across a range of measures, although they make better progress in some areas than children in need, a closer comparison group
- In the UK children are more likely to be in care if they are male, or black or mixed ethnicity, and the majority of looked after children are in care because of abuse or neglect.

Why Foster?

There are lots of reasons children and young people come into care.

No child or young person wants to be in care. When they come to you, they need:

- To learn how to trust adults again
- To feel safe and to be safe
- To be listened to
- To really feel they belong
- To explore and come to terms with their past.
- To receive a good education and fulfil their potential.
- To be prepared for independence
- To be able to grow into a full sense of themselves in a positive environment.
- To be healthy

Can I Foster?

Becoming a foster carer is a big decision and will impact on your life and others around you.....but you will **have the opportunity to change a child's life.**

You must:

- have a strong support network around you
- have a spare room
- be able to attend training
- be flexible and committed to caring for the children placed with you



WHO WILL I LOOK AFTER

- Children can be placed in care at any age between birth and 18
Consider what age range is best suited to your family
- Placements can be for short periods, respite, emergency or long term
Consider what you would prefer
- If a child is part of a sibling group, it is usually best to place them together
Do you have sufficient space for one or more children?
- What types of experiences and behaviour can you manage?
What do you feel confident about managing, can you manage disabilities?

We offer different types of fostering

- Short term.
- Long Term.
- Teenagers
- Sibling Groups
- Parent and Child.



FAQS

Q: HOW OLD DO I HAVE TO BE TO BECOME A FOSTER CARER?

Anyone over the age of 23 can apply to be a Foster Carer.

Q: DOES MY HOME NEED SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS?

Only to be a secure environment, to be kept clean and tidy and you must have a spare bedroom.

Q: WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED TO BECOME A FOSTER CARER?

Good communication skills both written and verbal essential. But most importantly, to have space in your heart to care for a young person in need.

Step by step.....

Applying to become a foster carer can take about three months.

This is a partnership, and we will work with you at every step, so if you are interested please complete our enquiry form at www.ownlifefostering.co.uk/contact-us and we will contact you within 24 hours to answer all of your questions.

We will use this opportunity to discuss fostering as a career opportunity for you and arrange an initial meeting at your home, at your convenience and talk in depth about becoming a foster carer.

For the next stage we will assign a social worker to you who would start the formal process which involves them coming to your house 6-8 times to complete a fostering assessment. You will also need to attend a 3-day training session.

The final stage is for you and your assessing social worker to attend a fostering panel for consideration of approval. Finally, you will start your new career in Foster care.

You could be only 12 weeks away from your new career.

