



London Borough
of Hounslow

Is there room in your life
for someone else's child?



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What is fostering?

Fostering means caring for a child or children who, for whatever reason, cannot live with their own family and offering them care, support and a secure home.

While fostering focuses on the needs of the child we also ensure that the foster carer and their family receive all the support they need. Fostering can be challenging but it can also offer enormous rewards and be great fun too!

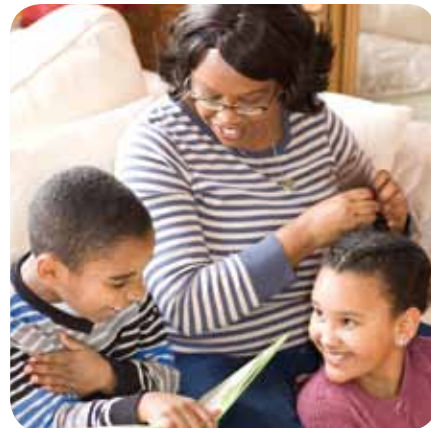
Fostering involves meeting the day-to-day needs of children. It can be for just a few days, a few months or sometimes until they are ready to live independently.



Foster carers provide security and support for children from a variety of backgrounds reflecting the diversity of the people of Hounslow.

By offering your time and your care you can give children the time, space and the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

Foster carers come from all walks of life and different backgrounds. What they share in common is an interest in giving children in care the opportunity to grow and change and to build a secure future for themselves.



Who needs fostering... and what it's like to be fostered

Any child who cannot be cared for by their own family.

All age ranges of children need fostering, from babies to teenagers and young mothers. Some may be children on their own and others may be with brothers and sisters who need to stay together.

Children come from a wide range of different backgrounds and some may have special requirements. For example they may have particular dietary, cultural or religious needs which need to be met. Some children may have learning difficulties or other special needs.

Whoever you foster – we will be here to give you all the necessary support and guidance you need, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

It's not always easy – but good foster carers make all the difference.

Many children who need to be fostered will have experienced family problems in the past. They may have experienced domestic violence, neglect or abuse or there may be family problems such

as illness which prevent them from living with their parents. Many will be feeling anxious and upset about leaving their family and moving in with strangers. However, with patience and understanding, foster carers can help children make a successful adjustment to their new home.

Fostered children want and need the same care as any other children. The foster carer's role is to bring stability and continuity of care to these children's lives.



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Who can foster?

Anyone who has the ability to show commitment and care to a child or children can foster.

Hounslow foster carers come from a variety of backgrounds. It makes no difference if you are working or unemployed, married or single. What is important is that you have the time, space and commitment to care for and support the child you are looking after.

Foster carers do not need to own their own home. They can be living in privately rented or council accommodation. Fostered children over the age of 2 years will need to have their own bedroom but children under 2 years can sleep in the foster carers bedroom.

We always try to match children with carers who share the same ethnicity, culture and religion as the children they care for.

Ideally, foster carers should have some childcare experience. However, most importantly, carers need to have patience and understanding and be

willing to work in partnership with the child's social worker to provide a stable and caring environment for a child.



What support do foster carers get?

We value our foster carers and are proud of the high level and quality of support we provide.

We want our carers to enjoy fostering and be equipped to do it well, which is why we provide a comprehensive range of training and support services.

Ongoing training is provided for carers to enable them to meet the particular needs of the children they care for.

After training is completed, Hounslow ensure carers have a team of experienced and committed workers to provide practical support and advice to them. This support is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

In addition, a support network is available from social workers and experienced foster carers, and there are regular carer's support group meetings.

Allowances differ from child to child depending on their age but currently carers receive up to £363 per week for each child in their care. Additionally, carers are entitled to a substantial grant to enable them to buy all the necessary equipment, e.g. bedroom furniture and

other essential equipment before they start fostering.



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What are the different types of fostering?

There are different types of fostering to suit different types of children including:-

- Short term fostering for children of all ages who may return to their parents within a few weeks or months.
- Long term fostering to provide a permanent home for a child or children until they are ready to leave home and take care of themselves.
- Teenage fostering, for teenagers who need a home until they are ready to live independently.



What happens when you apply to become a foster carer?

Becoming a foster carer can take around 4-6 months during which time we will need to carry out various checks and take up references.

As a first step you can come along to an information event where we explain the tasks, responsibilities and financial support in more detail. Existing foster carers will tell you what it is really like to be a foster carer and will be able to answer any questions you may have.

When it has been agreed with you that you should be assessed as a foster carer a social worker will be allocated to carry out your assessment.

This will entail making a number of visits to you and your family to assess your situation, carrying out background checks such as Police and medical checks and taking up personal references.

When your assessment is completed it will be presented to our Fostering Panel. If the Panel are satisfied that everything is in order then it will be recommended that you are approved as a foster carer. You will then be allocated a social

worker to provide you with all the ongoing advice, guidance and support you need in caring for the child placed with you.

Taking care of someone else's child is one of the most important and responsible tasks you can undertake which is why we need to be so thorough in the assessment process. It is also why we ensure that you are never alone. You will have all the support you need from us so that you can provide the best possible care for the child you look after.

Foster carers are ordinary people from all walks of life, doing an extraordinary job. The rewards are also extraordinary. Do please call us to find out more.



Next Steps

If you are interested in fostering, we'd love to hear from you.

Just telephone our Freephone Fostering Line on 0800 731 8558 and we would be delighted to invite you to attend an information event or arrange a meeting for you with a social worker.

We look forward to your call.

Family Placement Section
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TW3 4DN

Email: fostering@hounslow.gov.uk
Tel: 0800 731 8558
Fax: 0208 583 3444

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