



Nurture Fostering Fostering Guide

Welcome to our Fostering guide, we hope to be able to answer some of your questions but please feel free to telephone us with any questions you may have.

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We chose the company name Nurture because of its literal meaning: The dictionary definition of the word Nurture: care for and protect someone while they are growing

Our interpretation of this is that we will support the whole team caring for the child/children. Prioritising, meeting and exceeding their expectations through the support and development of the people who care for them **THAT'S YOU – THE FOSTER CARERS.**

NURTURE FOSTERING is an independent fostering agency providing a range of services for looked after children with our primary aim being to give children the opportunity to achieve their full potential and to live fulfilling lives within the community. This will be achieved by recruiting foster carers who can work with us to improve the lives of the vulnerable children we support. In order to accomplish this we will train and support our carers to achieve this.

The Agency operates in accordance with all current legislation:

- Fostering Regulations 2011
- National Minimum Standards
- Children's Act 1989
- Children & Young Personal Act 2011

The Registered Manager of the agency is a qualified, experienced and registered social work Manager who has gained a great deal of experience of working with both children and adults through fostering and child protection. This role is key to ensuring that the social work practice of the agency is delivered to a high standard.

We believe in high standard of care for children and gaining better outcomes for them, but this can only be achieved through supporting, encouraging and working in partnership with our foster carers. We will ensure that all foster carers are fully supported and engaged in our supervision, training and support plans and to ensure that we are available to our foster carers 24 hours a day 365/6 days of the year.

Our objectives:

- To recruit foster carers from a wide range of backgrounds to enable us to offer appropriate placements.
- A commitment to the ongoing training and personal development of our foster carers and employees.
- A commitment to a child centred and inclusive approach.
- To consider the gender and sexuality of fostered children when matching to placements.
- To consider and respect the racial, cultural, religious and language background of the fostered child when matching.
- To support our foster carers and children in placement to reduce placement breakdowns.

The aim of the Agency is to assist the placing authorities in meeting their requirements to improve the wellbeing of children in relation to the Five Outcomes for Children.

These being:

- Physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Protection from harm and neglect.
- Education training and recreation.
- The contribution made by them to society.
- Social and economic wellbeing.



What Support is provided to Nurture's Foster Parents?

Nurture Fostering knows only too well the challenges of working with children and young people and as such are well versed in providing support 24 hours a day 365 days of the year.

Our support packages can encompass the following:

- Telephone contact with a named Social Worker 24 hours a day.
- Out of hours dedicated staffing to support you.
- Specific training to enable the fostering household to provide a support to the child or young person.
- Mentoring for the child or young person.
- Regular respite breaks.
- One to one support workers to assist you with education, further education and apprenticeships.
- Regular monthly meetings with foster carers.
- Minimum of monthly visits by a social worker to fully support you in your role and to identify any training needs to give additional skills.
- Membership to the Fostering Network
- Free Advice on taxation specific to fostering.
- A vast list of training resources for you to access.





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What types of fostering are there?:

Short term fostering:

Placements can be for an overnight stay or up to two years.

Long term fostering:

This is when a child is fostered by you and the expectation is that the child will remain with you until they reach adulthood.

Emergency Fostering:

These placements are generally unplanned and occur at very short notice.

Who needs to be fostered?

- Children aged 0-18*
- Children with physical and learning disabilities
- Children & young people on remand
- Parent & Child placements
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Children on remand

*It should be noted, that over 60% of children entering the care system are aged 10 and over. Nurture Fostering are looking to work with carers who are happy to work with children in this age range.



How do you become a foster carer?

The main criteria to becoming a foster carer is that you are over the age of 23 and that you have a spare bedroom available in your home.

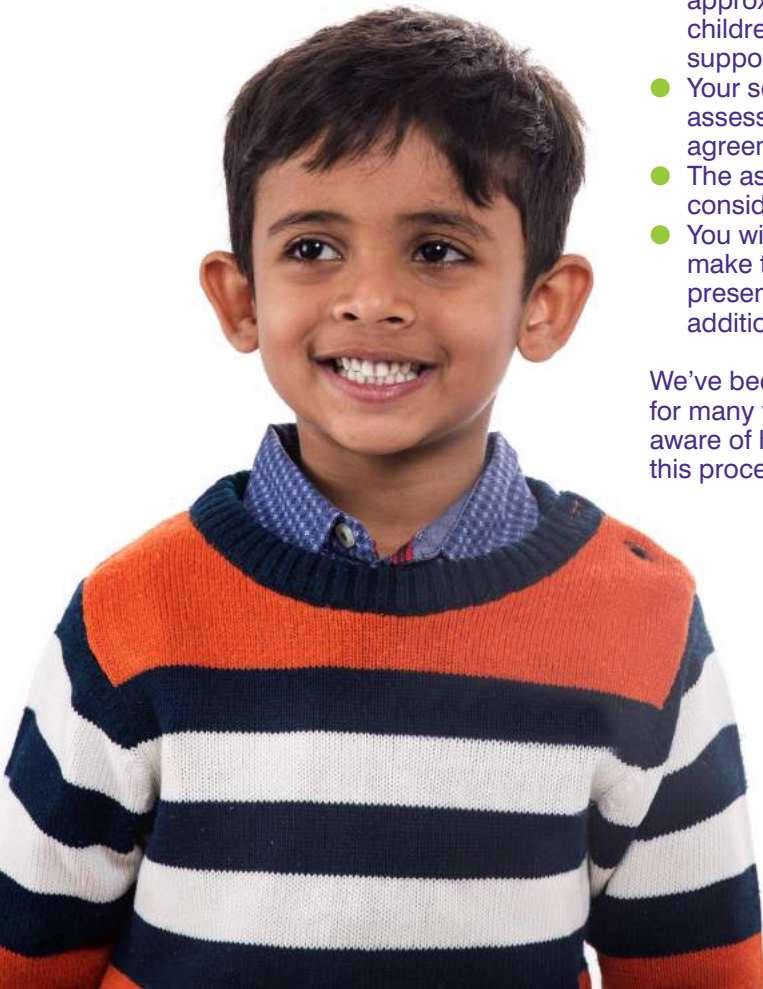
We run information sessions twice a month and this is an opportunity for you to meet our team, have an overview of what it's like to be a foster carer and an opportunity for you to ask any questions that you may have.

Application forms will be available for you to complete and return to us and then we will work at your pace through the assessment process but our aim is to finalise your journey within 4 months.

The assessment process includes the following:

- Initial Home visit to include Health & Safety expectations.
- Completion of DBS application forms for all household members aged 18+ as well as any frequent visitors to the family home and your support carers.
- You will need to arrange and attend a medical at your GP surgery.
- Completion of a local authority form to enable us to conduct a local authority check on you.
- Our business support team will work with you to complete your mandatory background checks and references.
- You will need to attend a three day Skills to Foster training programme or a one day refresher course for transferring carers prior to attending fostering panel.
- During the assessment process we will appoint a social worker to conduct your fostering assessment (Form F).
 - The social worker will be responsible for meeting with you on approximately six to eight occasions, interviewing you, your birth children where applicable, your nominated referees and back up or support carers.
 - Your social worker will be responsible for compiling your fostering assessment which on completion you will need to read and sign in agreement.
 - The assessment will be presented to our fostering panel for their consideration to approve you as a foster carer.
 - You will need to attend panel with your Social Worker and they will make the recommendation on your behalf. During the panel presentation, panel members may ask you or your social workers additional questions in support of your application.

We've been assessing foster carers for many years now and are well aware of how to support you through this process from start to finish.





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Frequently asked questions.

Will my police record prevent me from being a foster carer?

Not necessarily. We ask that you are open, honest and transparent from the start of your application so that we are able to be open and honest with you. All fostering applications are subject to a number of checks including DBS checks, references and local authority checks. There are a number of offences that would automatically exclude you from being considered as a foster carer and we can advise you of these.

Do I need a spare bedroom?

You will be required to have a spare bedroom that is available for fostering as all fostered children aged 2 years and over require their own bedroom. In some instances siblings are able to share however, this decision will be made by their social worker. A fostered child cannot share a bedroom with your own children.

Do I need to be married?

Anyone can apply to foster regardless of whether they are single, married, living together, and your race, religion or sexuality will not preclude your application. We are looking for household's who can support a child in need and accept applications from people from all faiths, backgrounds, gender and sexual orientation.

Can I have Pets?

You can have pets but it will depend on the type and number. Under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 these dogs are prohibited; Pitball Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Filo Brazillero, Dogo Argentino or any other dogs that present as aggressive. Some reptiles may also preclude your application.

What if English is not my first language?

Many children in care do not speak English as their first language but as a foster carer you will need to communicate with your Supervising Social Worker and other English speaking professionals. Therefore should English not be your first language then we need to discuss this aspect with you and work out an appropriate way of working and communicating with you.

Do I need a qualification?

No, once you are approved as a foster carer we will support you to achieve the Training Standards and Development required for all foster carers.

Will I be Paid?

Yes you will be paid weekly or monthly, whichever you would prefer, into your designated bank account. Our allowances are based on experience and the ages of children that you will be caring for. Should you be claiming benefits then you may still be entitled to some of these even when you are receiving the fostering allowance but you will need to seek guidance from the Department for Work and Pensions regarding this.

Should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us or visit our website: www.nurture-fostering.co.uk

If you're ready to progress or have more questions then just give us a call, we would love to hear from you.

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