

FOSTER FOR KENT



Come join us!

03000 420 002
kentfostering.co.uk



Thank you for taking that first important step to thinking about fostering and registering your interest to find out more about becoming a foster carer with Kent Fostering.

What is fostering?

Children need foster care for many different reasons: relationship problems at home, a family breakdown or a situation where their welfare is threatened. Our foster carers offer children and young people in Kent a safe and nurturing home when they are unable to live with their birth family.

There are many different types of foster care. Some foster carers will care for children in an emergency until long-term arrangements can be made, whilst others will look after children on a short-term basis until the child can return home or move on to a permanent home. Many of our foster carers provide long-term care for children, often for the duration of their childhood. We need foster carers to support all areas of our service, those who can offer short stays as well as those who can provide permanent homes for children through to adulthood.

As well as providing day-to-day care for the children and young people in their care, foster carers also advocate on behalf of the child, supporting their educational, health and social wellbeing, whilst keeping records, attending meetings and working with the wider Kent Fostering team and other professionals.



Who are we?

Kent Fostering is the most experienced fostering service in Kent, and we have been looking after children for over 40 years. We are a public service and not for profit, and therefore our only goal is to provide safe, nurturing homes for our children.

We are part of Kent County Council (KCC), for whom fostering is a priority. Unlike other independent fostering agencies, we make a commitment to place our Kent children in Kent homes, and therefore family time and other meetings and commitments will be more local to where you live. Our social workers and Kent Fostering team are local too, meaning that they can be available and responsive as and when you need them.

Why Kent Fostering?

As a foster carer for Kent Fostering, you will be supported throughout every step of your fostering career by your own Fostering Social Worker; both you and the child or children in your care will have a team of experienced and dedicated professionals around you. We provide 24-hour support to our foster carers through our fostering support teams and county out-of-hours service, so you can be reassured that whenever you need us, we will be there.

As a foster carer, you will be faced with new challenges and no two children will be alike! Kent Fostering therefore provides an extensive, high quality and varied training programme, to ensure that you are supported to learn and develop as you progress through your fostering journey. As part of our commitment to training and supporting our foster carers to meet the required standards of care, we have partnerships with organisations such as Solihull and Anna Freud to provide reparenting programmes designed to support the emotional health and wellbeing of both child and carer.

You will also receive ongoing support from Kent Foster Carers Association, a registered charity which aims to provide support to registered foster carers in Kent and the children in their care. Educational support and intervention is also available through Virtual School Kent, a local authority champion promoting the progress and educational achievements of the children and young people who are, or who have been, in our care.

In addition to receiving competitive weekly payments while a child is in your care, our successful 'payment for skills' career structure recognises your fostering experience and rewards you with additional weekly pay based on your knowledge, talent and skills.

Our foster carers

You will be joining our large community of foster carers in Kent of whom we are immensely proud. Within each local fostering support team you will have access to support groups where you can meet with likeminded people to share ideas and find solutions, and take part in fun social events. We also value the knowledge and expertise of our carers and so there are continual opportunities to support and develop new ways of working.



Who can foster?

Gay, straight, single, married, living together, with or without your own children, from any ethnic background, with any religious belief, Kent Fostering welcomes applications from all people interested in becoming a foster carer.

We are looking for people with:

- Time and commitment to care for a child
- Energy and enthusiasm
- Observant
- Patience and resilience
- Strong communication skills.

Foster carers must be over 18 years old, have a spare bedroom available, and live in Kent.

Fostering a child is a full-time role and as a foster carer, you will need to be readily available to meet the child's needs. This could include facilitating time with their family, attending meetings for health and education or transport to and from school. In some situations, carers can also work part-time in addition to fostering depending on the child's circumstances and the flexibility of the foster carer's work.



The fostering process

From enquiry to approval, our process helps ensure a positive fostering experience for everyone involved. The fostering assessment process is something which every potential foster carer will need to undergo before they can become a foster carer with Kent Fostering. We always endeavour to complete the process within six months, and for foster carers transferring from another fostering agency this will usually be completed within three to four months.

You will be guided throughout the entire fostering process by our dedicated and friendly Fostering Assessment team. Initially, we will need to find out a bit more about you, performing some statutory checks and if successful, one of our team will come and visit you. There will be initial training and a full assessment that will include all household members. Once you have been approved to become a foster carer, we will then go through the next steps to help you welcome a child or children into your home.

What Kent Fostering offers

Being a foster carer is not only rewarding because of the difference you can make to a child, but we also offer our carers great support and training:

- A weekly payment package.
- Additional payments for skills.
- Regular local training and opportunities to gain qualifications.
- 24-hour support.
- An informative induction and your own foster care mentor when you start.
- An allocated mentor during your first year of fostering and beyond.
- Access to local support groups.
- 14 nights' holiday entitlement (16 as a Skilled or Advanced Level Carer).
- Foster Talk and Kent Foster Carer Association membership.
- Access to Virtual School Kent.
- Access to the Children and Young People's Council.
- Participation in appreciation and activity days.
- Kent Rewards (providing discounts both locally and nationally off well-known retailers).

Join our team!



Foster carers have the unique opportunity to make a real difference to a child or young person's life, supporting them and working to help them develop and achieve their potential. Becoming a foster carer helps children, young people and their families to rebuild and reunite, whilst protecting a young person's safety. Our foster carers support and care for vulnerable children and young people in Kent whilst their birth parents are unable to, or are given the necessary help and support they need to progress.

Fostering is one of the most varied, challenging and rewarding jobs you can do and as a foster carer you will need to be patient, supportive, nurturing, loving, understanding and kind. Age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion and disability have no impact on a person's ability to become a foster carer with Kent Fostering, only the ability to provide a loving and supportive home alongside the right motivation, knowledge and skills. We are looking to recruit, train and support more new foster carers in Kent from all different backgrounds, and hope that this way all our children and young people's time in care will be the best that it can possibly be.

Our children in Kent need local Kent-based foster carers and we'd love to hear from you! If you would like to learn more about the advantages of fostering with Kent Fostering, please get in touch with our enquiries team today!

**Maria Cordrey & Mark Vening, Heads of Fostering
at Kent Fostering**

Next steps

There is a great need for many different types of foster carers and many children and young people who need safe and secure homes in Kent.

If you wish to begin your fostering application process with Kent Fostering, please contact our enquiries team today!

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