

Fostering with Five Rivers Child Care

About Five Rivers

Five Rivers Child Care is a well established fostering agency in the UK.

Operating as a social enterprise means that income received from fostering is reinvested into our child care services and training for our foster carers.

We hope this leaflet can help answer some of your initial queries about fostering.

Five Rivers' Foster Carers

When a young person comes into care they often have suffered significant trauma in their life. The Local Authority will make a referral to us when a young person has complex emotional and behaviour needs as a result of these experiences.

Five Rivers' foster carers provide safety and consistency and a sense of order as a starting point to help them feel safe.

Fostering is a way of providing a family life for children who cannot live with their own parents.

It is often used to provide temporary care while parents get help sorting out problems, take a break, or to help children or young people through a difficult period in their lives.

Often children will return home once the problems that caused them to come into foster care have been resolved and that it is clear that their parents are able to look after them safely and meet their needs.

Other children may stay in long-term foster care, some may be adopted, and others will move on to live independently.

Types of foster care

Foster care can last for days, months or even years, depending upon the circumstances and needs of the child.

Emergency Placements

This type of fostering involves caring for children who need somewhere safe to stay immediately, usually for a few nights. This can often happen at very short notice.

Short Term (Temporary) Placements

Short term foster carers provide a temporary place to stay until the child can return home to their own family, move into a longer term fostering placement or an adoptive family is found. This can last for a few weeks or months, sometimes longer.

Long Term (Permanent) Placements

Fostering is a way of offering children a home until they can return to their own families. However, when a child cannot return home, decisions have to be made to find a permanent family for the child. For some children, such as those who are older or in regular contact with their birth family, long term foster care may be preferred to adoption.

Children and young people in long term foster care continue to be a legal part of their own family (even if they have only a limited amount of contact with them) but live with long term foster carers until they reach adulthood and are ready to live independently.

Respite Placements

Respite involves children living with their own family or foster carers, but having short stays with another foster family, to give their family/main carers a break. This usually involves looking after a child or young person who is placed with the foster carers for a weekend or 1-2 weeks.

Parent and Child Placements

This type of placement is provided to a mother and/or father and their children, where foster carers can provide support and guidance to the parent(s) and help them develop parenting skills.

Some Parent and Child foster carers work as part of a professional team to undertake a formal assessment of the parenting ability of the mother and/or father.

Short-breaks

Short-breaks can, in some cases, be where children with disabilities, children with special needs or any behaviour that needs to be managed. This can be a short-stay, pre-planned or on a regular basis with a new family, normally where their parents or usual foster carers have a short break for themselves.



Who can apply?

Many people worry about whether they have what it takes to be a foster carer.

All we ask is that you can say yes to the following questions:

- Are you over 21?
- Do you have a spare bedroom?

You do not need any formal qualifications to be a foster carer and we welcome all applications. Our experience tells us that placing young people with foster carers who reflect the background of our young people is important – so we are always looking for carers from all religions and cultures.

Why choose us - our promise to you

We know that for you to be able to offer a warm and stable environment you need to feel supported, understood and cared for by us, Five Rivers. We commit to very high levels of quality training and support.

Fostering is a demanding and, at times, stressful job! To help you succeed in caring for children who are often traumatised and challenging we provide:

- 24 hour on call system
- Excellent training
- Activities for birth and looked-after-children
- Monthly supervision with your allocated social worker
- Regular meetings with other Five Rivers foster carers (support group)
- Specialist input, if required, from therapists, educationalists and psychologists
- Regular training and support to help you get the best out of fostering
- Paid holidays
- Highly competitive fostering allowance

What happens next – the application process

We understand that applying to become a foster carer can be a very daunting process and is a big decision for anyone to make, which is why we ensure we keep this process as simple as possible:

- Step 1 Initial enquiry
- Step 2 Telephone discussion
- Step 3 Home visit & complete application form
- Step 4 Statutory checks
- Step 5 Frequent home visits
- Step 6 Training
- Step 7 Developing your foster carer profile (this is sent to local authorities)
- Step 8 Panel
- Step 9 Approved foster carer status

A qualified social worker will visit you (and your partner if applicable) usually on a weekly basis for meetings which normally take about 2 hours. These sessions will explore:

- Your background
- Your current support network
- Your parenting and childcare skills, attitudes and experience
- Your ability to work within a team
- How you have resolved any past difficulties in your life e.g. previous relationships, bereavements and traumas
- Your attitude to training and skills development
- Your ability to care for children with a wide range of issues and behavioural difficulties
- The impact fostering may have on you and all household members including children

Once we have completed our assessment we will present the assessment to our independent panel of experts who will make a recommendation to the Five Rivers' Decision Maker in relation to your application.

To discuss a fostering application:



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