

Fostering Information Guide

Join Rotherham's Fostering Family



Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council 

 fosteringrotherham.com

F♥**OSTERING**
ROTHERHAM

Welcome to Fostering Rotherham. Thank you for choosing to find out more about fostering with us.

Fostering is a big decision for any family to make, but we're confident that you'll find the rewards are definitely worth it.

This pack will give you an insight into what it's like to foster with us and how you can go about joining our fostering family.

You'll learn about how we support you to give the stability of a family environment to a local child. You can give them the chance at life that they want and deserve. If this inspires you, then this pack is just the start.

Find out more by contacting our Fostering Rotherham team today:

Visit: www.fosteringrotherham.com

Call: 01709 357370

Email: support@fosteringrotherham.com

Follow us on social

Facebook: [@FosteringRotherham](https://www.facebook.com/FosteringRotherham)

Instagram: [@FosteringRotherham](https://www.instagram.com/FosteringRotherham)

Twitter: [@FosterRotherham](https://twitter.com/FosterRotherham)



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About Us

Fostering Rotherham is part of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, which means we operate as a not for profit organisation.

We believe that children and young people in Rotherham should grow up with the right support to allow them to be healthy, safe and achieve their potential in life. We can't do this on our own.

We're always looking to expand our community of fostering families from across the Rotherham and South Yorkshire area so we can improve the lives of local children and young people.

Our fantastic local foster carer heroes offer up their homes and hearts to young people. This means that Rotherham's children stay local, maintaining their school life, family connections and friendships. By fostering with us you'll be helping children in your community to thrive.

We work with **122 fostering families** from across Rotherham and South Yorkshire to improve the lives of local children and young people.

Every day, all our fostering team and carers live the Rotherham values that are at the core of what we do. We believe in honesty, accountability and always being respectful. We are ambitious, because we want to make a real change for all of Rotherham's looked after children, and we are proud of what we do.

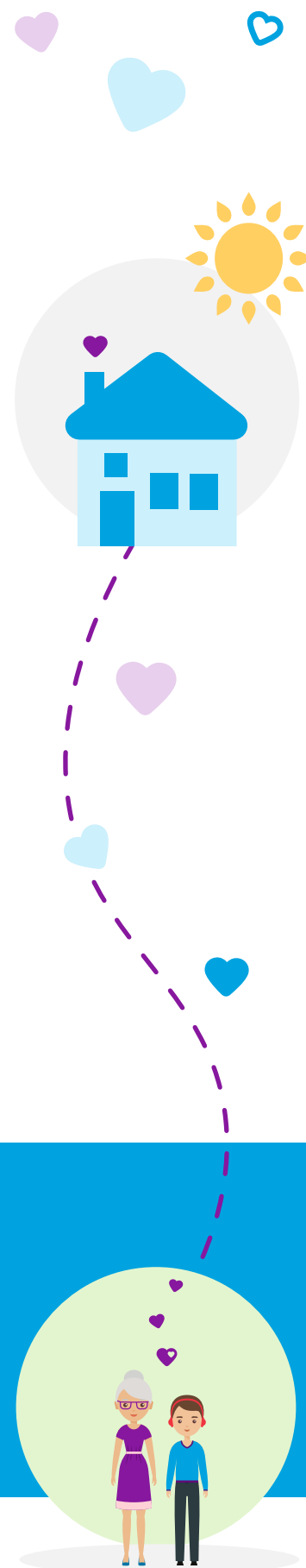
We hope to welcome you into our local fostering family very soon.

Whether you're reading about fostering for the first time or it's something you've been considering for a while, we'd love to hear from you.

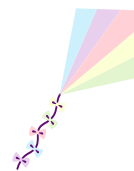


"We feel proud every time someone asks us what we do and we say we're a fostering family."

- Andrea, Foster Carer



Foster care - a life changing choice



Foster care - a life changing choice for you and the children in your care.

Fostering provides a home for children and young people who can no longer be cared for by their parents. This includes closely working with social workers and parents and other professionals who are involved in the children's lives. There are many different types of fostering depending on the needs of the child or young person. A foster carer may be there to care for a child in an emergency, or they may provide a long-term home for the remainder of a child's time in care.

As you consider becoming a foster carer, you might want to think about the following questions:

- Can you create a secure and stable environment where children feel safe, cared for and loved?
- Are you able to model a healthy lifestyle and encourage children to make healthy choices in regards to eating habits, exercise, personal hygiene and evaluating risks?
- Are you comfortable in implementing routines and boundaries, and providing guidance and support?
- Can you be a constructive and consistent role model who chooses positive reinforcement as a way of managing behaviour?
- Can you provide an environment that enables children to thrive and that allows them to develop at their own pace, understanding that every child is unique and one size does not fit all?
- Do you have the experience and insight to separate the child from their behaviour?
- Do you want to understand a child's past to better understand how it is impacting upon their behaviour?
- Are you a flexible and resilient person? The child/ren in your care need you to be able to adapt to their needs and not take things personally.
- Do you have a strong support network? You will have good and bad days and it is essential that you have friends and family that you can turn to for support when things get difficult.



Foster care - a life changing choice

We believe these are some of the essential strengths and attributes needed to be a foster carer:

- Openness
- Trustworthiness and honesty
- A nurturing, caring and empathetic approach with children and young people
- Energy, stamina, commitment
- Flexibility – someone who enjoys variety and flexibility in work
- Confidence and optimism
- Composure – able to think clearly and objectively during times of stress or high pressure and remain calm
- Collaboration – have a sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others; being accepting of differences and other people
- The ability to work alongside other people who are involved with the foster child, such as other professionals (education/healthcare/social workers/police) and the child's birth parents
- Respectful of children and their ethnicities, their cultural and religious beliefs. Like our carers, our looked after children come from a range of different backgrounds, and it is important that we respect this and allow children opportunities to explore and express their individual faiths and beliefs.
- A keen learner - with a willingness to attend training & support groups to ensure that your knowledge and understanding is kept up to date

As an approved foster carer you will have the following responsibilities:

- Provide a safe and caring home for a vulnerable child or young person and help them to keep themselves safe
- Promote education and maintain a close connection with school for the child/children in your care
- Work closely with children's families and others who are important to the child and support contact with a child's parents and family (if appropriate)
- Work as part of a team with other professionals in accordance with the care plan provided for the child or young person
- Maintain strict confidentiality with regards to the young person or child in your care, ensuring their safety and protection at all times
- Provide opportunities and encouragement to try new activities and experiences - such as a first trip to the seaside

If you enjoy working with children, then fostering could be for you. You can work from home and transform a child's life.

If this sounds like the role for you, find out how you can help to change a child's life by booking a call with our fostering advisers here: www.fosteringrotherham.com/book

Who needs fostering and what does it involve?

Children enter foster care for many reasons.

Each child will bring their own strengths, hopes and dreams - just like anyone. What all looked after children have in common is the need for a loving, safe, supportive home. That's where Fostering Rotherham and you come in.

Every looked after child has a different story.

Some may have experienced abuse or neglect, some families might have long-term illness or experience of mental health or drug/alcohol dependency which means they are currently unable to look after their child.



"The biggest thing you can do for these kids is just be there for them"

- Martin and Amanda,
Foster Carers



"Fostering really can turn a child's life around, and we really can make a difference"

- Michelle, Foster Carer



"I was nervous at first, but when I saw his little sad face walk through the door all my nerves and doubts just vanished. He needed me and I was there for him"

- Marilyn, Foster Carer



Our team makes sure each child is safe and supported.

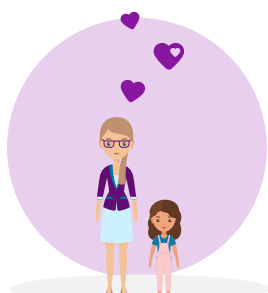
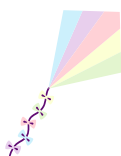
That means matching a child with a foster carer on either a long-term basis or in the form of short-term care. Wherever possible it involves working in partnership with birth families so that the child is one day able to return.



Connor, aged 11, currently lives with task centred foster carers on a short term placement, but would love to find a more long-term home.

Connor has dyspraxia, which means he finds coordination difficult. He is very able academically, but finds writing tricky. Making friends with other children is sometimes hard. He doesn't like to join in playground games as he finds throwing or kicking a ball difficult.

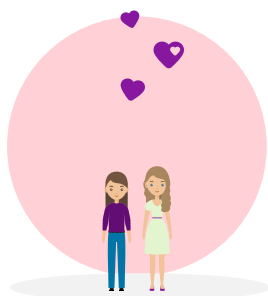
Connor's current foster carers are working with him on building his confidence and have already seen really positive results, which his teachers have commented on.



Could you be the person who gives a child like Georgia, aged 4, the start in life she deserves?

Georgia was born with Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). In her case this means that she reaches certain milestones later than her peers. She receives help from our in-house Therapeutic Team, speech and language therapists and additional help at school.

She's a caring, affectionate little girl who'd love a home with someone who has the patience to allow her to develop at her own pace and can support her continued access to the therapies she needs to flourish.

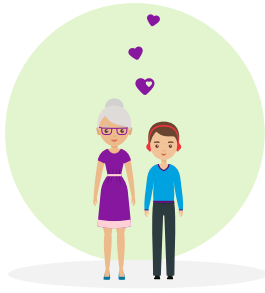


Ella, aged 14, came into foster care along with her sister Daisy, aged 12.

Ella and Daisy are placed separately, but have regular contact through the Mockingbird Hub network. The girls had grown apart while in care, but thanks to the work of our foster carer network they've been able to have sleepovers and now have a really close relationship.

Ella is currently in a short-term placement, but would love to find a home with a fostering family who could continue to support her relationship with her sister.





Ben, aged 17, entered foster care when his mum became too ill to care for him. They still have regular contact and have a good relationship.

Ben is currently studying for an NVQ in catering, an interest both his birth mum and his current task centred foster carer have encouraged him to follow. He's gained a great deal of confidence during his time at college and is working really hard to gain his qualification.

Ben turns 18 in 5 months' time, at which point he is hoping to find a stable placement to support him through the rest of his time in education. Alternatively he may stay with his foster carers under the government's Staying Put scheme which supports young people who turn 18 whilst living in a foster home to remain with the family who has been caring for them.



Aemon, aged 8, is a warm-hearted, funny little boy.

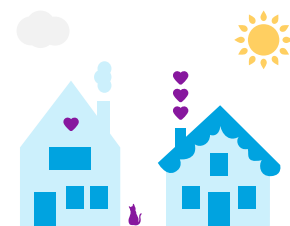
He is autistic and for him this means he finds change quite difficult. He'd love someone to care for him who understands his needs and can give him a long-term place to feel at home in.

Aemon is currently being supported by our in-house Therapeutic Team and will continue to work with them along with his future foster carers.

**Are you the person who will make a difference to a child's life?
Find out how you can help to change a child's life by booking
a call with our fostering advisers here:**

www.fosteringrotherham.com/book

Please note: these care stories are fictional stories of looked after children.
No real names or stories of children have been used in the interest of
safeguarding and privacy.





Types of Foster Care

Foster carers come in all shapes and sizes, from all different walks of life and have a range of life experiences, but we believe there's a type of foster care to fit everyone.

Fostering provides a home for children and young people who can no longer be cared for by their parents. There are many different types of fostering depending on the needs of the child or young person. A foster carer may be there to care for a child in an emergency, or they may provide a long-term home for the remainder of a child's time in care. Either way, you could be there with them for some of the most important milestones of their life.



1. Task centred foster care

Task centred foster care, also known as short term foster care, can range from a one night stay to a period of up to two years while the local authority assesses what the best next steps are for the child's future care. Task centred foster care is for looked after children who need a temporary place to stay before returning to their families or into longer-term fostering or adoption.



Belinda decided to become a short-term (or task centred) foster carer. This means that she takes children for a one night stay or up to a stay of several months while the local authority determines where the best long-term home would be. At first she thought that this would be a good way to get a taste for what foster care was all about. Belinda has been fostering for 11 years now and can't imagine doing anything else!

She has continued to be a task centred foster carer as she loves being able to help a range of children and is great at preparing them for moving on to a longer term home. Her favourite moments are when her work ends with looked after children being reunited with their birth parents or finding a great life with a future adoptive or long-term fostering family.

Belinda is often called upon with little notice when there is a need to quickly find a home for a child to stay. She is a calm and adaptable person, so this doesn't faze her.





2. Long-term foster care

If children are not able to go back to their own families long-term fostering offers children a more stable home, often lasting until they are 18 and older. Having a stable home is key for the development of all foster children and can be equally rewarding for the foster family.



Tom and Sarah have been foster carers for 15 years. As long-term foster carers they provide stable, lasting homes for children who are unable to return to their birth family.

The couple have fostered 8 children so far and say every one of them has become a part of their family. Although long-term placements usually last until a child reaches 18, Sarah and Tom love that even now the children have grown up they still return for visits. Some of them now have their own children who come along too! The couple have felt privileged to be present for some of the most memorable experiences of the children's lives and they've loved seeing them and grow in confidence.



3. Emergency foster care

Emergency foster carers take children at very short notice when there is an urgent need for them to be placed in a safe home. This usually lasts for just a few days while the local authority assesses what's best for the child's ongoing care. Often, this type of care is done alongside other types of placements.



Sajinder became a foster carer after he saw the difference his foster carer friend made to local children's lives.

Sajinder had his own business but wanted to spend more time with his family so foster care felt like a really great fit for him. He has now scaled back his business so that he can work part time, which allows him to be a stay-at-home dad to his 9 year old birth daughter, Nisha, and Mohan (6) who lives on a long-term basis with Sajinder and his wife, who works full-time.

Alongside long-term foster care, Sajinder also keeps a bedroom free so that he can offer emergency foster care. This means he takes children at very short notice when there is an urgent need for them to be matched in a safe home.



4. Second Home Care

Second Home Care, also known as Respite Care is short period of care that allows looked after children some time away from their foster carers in order to have new experiences with foster carers that are familiar to them, like a second family.



John and Adam are second home carers. They provide a home-away-from-home for children to allow them some time away from their foster carers in a place they're familiar with. This can be for a one night sleepover or a whole week. The couple are both teachers and wanted to be able to continue with the careers they had built at the same time as being foster carers.

They really enjoy welcoming the same children to their home for a sleepover or a weekend stay or for longer during the school holidays. Second home care is also available through our Mockingbird Hubs.



5. Parent and Child

Parent and child placements provide a safe and secure environment for new parents to learn how to parent to the best of their ability with the guidance of a foster carer.



Joanna was a nurse, but felt that the unsociable hours were taking their toll. As a naturally caring person, she still wanted to do something where she would be helping people in her local community. Joanna is now a parent and child foster carer. She provides a safe and secure environment for a new parent to learn how to take care of a baby, infant or child to the best of their ability.

Her experiences both as a nurse and as a parent of two grown up daughters mean she has a wealth of knowledge to draw upon to guide the parents and children in her care.





6. Stepdown and complex care

Stepdown care is provided for young people who have previously been or currently live in a residential care home. Many of these young people would thrive in a fostering family environment. We have incredible carers who offer care to these children and young people, known as Stepdown carers.

Stepdown is all about providing stability to a child who might have experienced a lot of changes in their life. Stepdown carers offer support to a young person's education. They carry out daily activities to support emotional and psychological wellbeing. These activities use a therapeutic model, which also involves close communication with social workers.

If you have experience of caring for and working with children or have fostered before, you might want to help older children who have experienced some difficulties. We're always looking to recruit more experienced carers to foster for our Stepdown Programme, as well as those who can care for a child with more complex health or behavioural needs.

Stepdown carers receive a complex payment of £200 a week. This is in addition to your carer fee, which will be paid at Skills Level 4 (£360). With carer fee, children's allowance and the complex payment you could receive anywhere between £716 and £790.30 per week. The only variation here would be around the child's allowance so the skills level and complex care pay would be static at £560 per week.

We also welcome carers who foster children and young people with long-term complex needs. We appreciate that when caring for a child with very complex needs and/or disabilities, you will need an additional level of support. Our complex carers dedicate an incredible amount of time to helping these young people. To aid you, we offer your Skills Level carer fee and the child's weekly allowance (which depends on their age), as well as a complex payment of £100 a week.



Cathy and Simon pursued specific training to gain the skills and knowledge needed to carry out specialist therapeutic caring. This enables them to care for children of various ages who have needs that require higher levels of skill and experience.

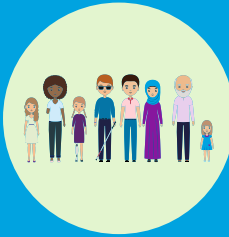
They really enjoy having the ability to see the positive effect that their input has on the children they care for. They also feel really proud to have been able to progress to a point where they feel at the pinnacle of their role.

Because of their higher skill set, Cathy and Simon were supported by their supervising social worker who ensured that they received the right financial package.



7. 'Families Together'

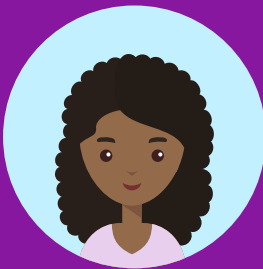
Our Families Together team is a group of specialist foster carers that support families who have a child with a physical or learning disability. They look after disabled children aged 0-19 for short periods such as a tea-time meal, a weekend sleepover or a longer stay during the school holidays.



Gary has been fostering for 5 years. He's part of a team of specialist foster carers that supports families who have a child with additional needs.

As a Families Together carer, Gary looks after disabled children aged 0-19 for short periods. He really enjoys supporting families and their children and loves getting to know the kids during a tea-time visit, where he enjoys preparing their favourite meal for them, or spending a weekend once a month together either chilling out at home or taking his visitors for fun days out. Gary also enjoys welcoming the children into his home for longer periods during school holidays.

The best thing about Families Together fostering for Gary is that he gets to help both families and their children and gets to know them really well, with the same children returning again and again. He also loves the flexibility of Families Together Care, which means that he still has plenty of time to dedicate to his full-time job and is also able to spend time with his grown-up birth children.



"As a Families Together Short Break carer it is the privilege of helping to support children and their families as a unit."

- Liz, Foster Carer

Not sure which path is right for you?

Have a chat with one of our fostering advisers to discuss which type of foster care is best for you and your family.

You can book your call here:

www.fosteringrotherham.com/book

These care stories are fictional examples indicative of the experiences of local foster carers who foster with Rotherham.

Benefits at a Glance

Here are some of the best reasons to join our team:

1

You'll **help local children**, keeping them near the places and people they know and in the community they've grown up in. This has a huge effect helping them maintain a sense of stability and consistency in their lives at a time when they may be experiencing some upheaval.

2

You'll **give back to your local area**, creating a better future for all of Rotherham by ensuring the well-being of some of its most vulnerable children. We're not for profit, which means all the funds we have go straight into improving the lives of local children.

3

You'll **develop a range of skills**, building on your natural abilities as a carer and learning how to advocate for looked after children. We support your learning with a comprehensive range of training opportunities, including your initial Skills To Foster training.

4

You'll **get wide-reaching support** from our dedicated team of experienced social workers. We'll provide respite care if you need a break through the provision of 14 days of annual leave.

5

You'll **receive a highly competitive monthly support allowance** as well as tax relief and payments to cover additional expenses such as birthdays and cultural holidays, including Christmas. On average, our foster carers earn £442 per week dependent on your skill set and the number of children you care for.

6

You'll **be welcomed into a vibrant local community** of foster carers who support each other with friendship, advice and practical help.

7

You'll **feel a real sense of pride** in yourself for having made a difference to a young person's life.

Find out why so many local people have joined our Fostering Rotherham family by speaking to our team today. You can book a call here:

www.fosteringrotherham.com/book

Round the clock support

Our priority is always to ensure the very best outcome for every young person we match with our foster carers. To make this happen we know that you need to receive the very best support possible. That's why we are always here for you.

We've put in place a strong support package to make sure that you know you'll always be able to rely on Fostering Rotherham throughout your fostering journey.

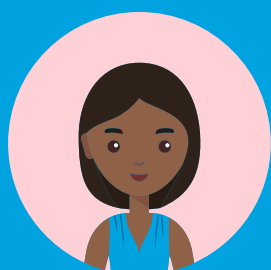
While you're going through the process of becoming a foster carer, you'll have a dedicated social worker who you'll get to know really well. Because of the strong relationships we build with our foster carers, you'll feel comfortable asking for whatever help you need.

The support continues once you've joined our fostering family.



Personal fostering social worker

After a child is matched with you, you'll be allocated a social worker who provides ongoing support for you and your family. They will help you to access any of the help we've put in place. You'll also be able to contact a duty manager during work hours.



"The fostering team are fantastic, my social worker has always been there for me, I've never really felt alone."

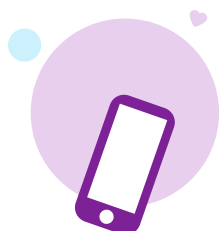
- Anita, Foster Carer





Buddy System

It's important you feel supported at all times and sometimes this support comes from our community of experienced foster carers. We buddy up new foster carers with an experienced carer for the first six months, so you can get advice from someone who has been in your shoes - especially leading up to and during your first placement. Beyond this new foster carers can join our New Carers Support Group who meet monthly in person or virtually. This is a great opportunity to get to know other local foster carers, share tips and advice as well as make new friends.



Telephone Helpline

If you are unable to speak to your assigned social worker, your query or issue will be dealt with by our fostering duty or emergency out of hours teams. We can access all the information we need to help with your issue. We know that family life doesn't end at bedtime, so we're here for you whenever you need us.



Monthly support groups

There's nothing like meeting people face-to-face, so we run a range of support groups for all our foster carers. New carers can access a special monthly support group. We also run specific groups for carers of young babies, your wider family and your birth children who want to be able to chat together and many more.





Rotherham Foster Care Association Facebook Page

A great way to make friends and offer encouragement and advice to the wider Fostering Rotherham community. You can be confident that you'll get confidential support through our private Facebook page from the people who've been just where you are now. Our Foster Care Association also has regular, in-person meet-ups in local venues.



Therapeutic Team

Unlike many other fostering services, we have a dedicated therapeutic team to help you navigate the emotional needs and behavioural challenges a foster child may present. We recognise that this support is vital for the well being of our looked after children.

The therapeutic team can offer a variety of support, such as face to face therapeutic sessions with the child, and sessions with the carer in order to determine how to best support the child. They provide social stories to help the child understand their circumstances better, as well as offering supportive phone calls and delivering therapeutic training.

Over 80% of our carers say that they would recommend fostering with Rotherham Council.

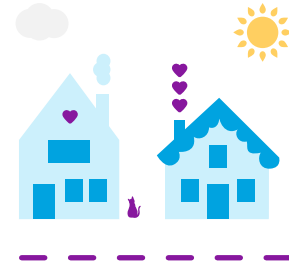
To take the first step towards joining the fostering family, speak with one of our team about how fostering can work for you.

Book your call here:

www.fosteringrotherham.com/book



Financial Support



Here at Fostering Rotherham we want you to feel valued.

That's why we provide financial support to all our foster carers for the amazing work they do.

Although money might not be your first concern, it is important that you understand the fees and allowances in order to decide if fostering is affordable for your family.

On average, we pay our foster carers **£442 per week** to care for children and young people who need help in our community. This is equivalent to **£1,915 per month**, which is above the national average. The actual amount you will earn will depend on how many children you are caring for, their ages and other factors. It will also depend if you are full-time or a part-time foster carer and your level of experience.

We value the hard work, time and dedication that our foster carers give day-in, day-out. That means that we'll support you so you can fully enjoy this rewarding role. We would never want a person's financial situation to be a barrier to them helping Rotherham's children.

We are committed to providing a competitive weekly allowance to enable you to focus your attention on the child in your care, making them feel cherished and valued and giving them the chance to thrive.

We pay allowances weekly to give you control over your budget and easily respond to life's everyday needs. These allowances break down into a skills-level based payment, and an allowance for the child in your care.

Here are some examples of how much financial support our fostering families can receive:



Linda is a Level Two foster carer. She came to fostering after doing volunteer work with local teenagers. Linda wanted a paid role that still felt like she was giving back to her community and fostering was the perfect fit. She currently cares for siblings Carter, aged 6, and Archie, aged 9. By opening up her home to more than one child, Linda has enabled the brothers to stay together.

As a Level Two foster carer with two children in her care, Linda receives:
Foster Carer Fee = £250
Basic Allowance = £304.24
Total = £554.24 per week/£2,216.96 per month*



Ex-teaching assistant **Khadija** is a Level Three foster carer. Khadija currently cares for Ella, aged 11. Through Khadija's care, Ella has really found her confidence. This has led to an improvement in her school work and friendships. Her school teachers are thrilled with the progress they see her make every day.

As a Level Three foster carer, with one child in her care, Khadija receives:

Foster Carer Fee = £175 per week

Basic Allowance = £189.37 per week

Total = **£364.37 per week / £1,578.93 per month***



Melissa and Kevin are Level Four foster carers. After taking early retirement the couple found that they missed keeping busy but wanted to do something where they'd feel part of a community of like-minded people. The couple currently care for Jacob, aged 13, and Brady, aged 16. The couple love sharing their passion for football with the boys and the four are regular supporters of Rotherham FC, which Melissa and Kevin say helps with modelling resilience in the face of disappointment!

As Level Four foster carers, Melissa and Kevin receive:

Foster Carer Fee = £720 per week

Basic Allowance = £419.67 per week

Total = **£1139.67 per week / £4,938 per month***



Mercy, a former shop assistant, has been looking after Jackson, aged 15, for the past year. Their shared love of the outdoors means that Jackson has found new interests and now hopes to complete an NVQ in landscaping after he finishes school.

As a Level One foster carer with one child in her care, Mercy receives:

Foster carer fee: £100 per week

Basic allowance: £189.37 per week

Total = **£289.37 per week / £1,253 per month***

To learn more about our Financial Support and how much fees and allowances we will provide, download our financial guide via our website here: www.fosteringrotherham.com/financial-support

*Monthly calculations are for demonstration purposes only and are based on having the placement scenarios in the examples above, in place full time for a period of 365 days per year. The amounts paid to you will be based on actual placement durations, your fostering skills levels and the age of the children placed with you.

Comprehensive Local Training

When you foster with us, we'll give you the skills you need to care for looked after children, right from day one of your assessment.

Even after you're an approved carer, the chances to learn never stop. Because every young person is unique, our training opportunities cover a wide range of topics so you will always have access to the skills and tools you need to support the child in your care.



Our training is easy to understand and gives you real life skills that lead to recognisable, positive outcomes that you can see in your everyday life.



We give you access to training right from the very early stages of your journey with us.

Skills to Foster™ training takes place while you're in assessment. It's led by our Fostering Team and existing foster carers, because they really understand where you're at and what you need to know.

Everyone's really approachable and our foster carers say it gives them a great insight into what it's like to be a foster carer.



When you become an approved foster carer, we'll work with you to produce a personal development plan to guide you through your first year as a foster carer so you'll know exactly what you're going to learn.



We know that every foster carer and looked after child's needs differ and that these change over time.

That's why we provide free year-round courses so you can pick and choose the areas which are most important to you at the time you need access to them.

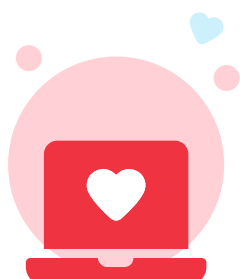


We believe in life-long learning, so you'll always be given the opportunity to gain more skills, meaning that you'll be able to care for more complex placements as you progress.



Because we're based in the heart of Rotherham you can be sure that training is always going to be available on your doorstep.

Our foster carers also love that they meet fellow carers from our local community and can get to know our friendly fostering advisers. There's always a familiar face around when you foster with us.



Providing some of our courses virtually can be really helpful to foster carers who work full time and have limited time to attend courses face-to-face.



"The training was fantastic. It opens your eyes to situations and equips you on how to deal with certain situations, who to contact, what resources are available."

- Mel and Jamie, Foster Carers



Our local fostering community



Join our Fostering Family.

When you join the Fostering Rotherham family, you are never alone.

We have a wonderful community of foster carers in Rotherham and we look forward to welcoming you to our wraparound support network.




Regular meet-ups at our community groups

We have regular community groups for practical support, but also for social meet-ups where you can chat together over coffee or lunch.




A thriving community of 3 Mockingbird Hubs

Our three Mockingbird Hubs provide central support networks to groups of fostering families. Based at the home of an experienced foster carer, Mockingbird Hubs provide a space for socialising, support and friendship. The hub carers also provide planned or emergency sleepovers. They work just like an extended family of cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents.



When you become a foster carer you may join a Mockingbird Hub and you'll be able to link up with your local hub. To help we'll arrange a personalised meet and greet with your nearest hub leader to welcome you.

We have plans to expand our network of hubs across the Rotherham borough to provide support for even more fostering families.





Join our Fostering Association

Joining our Fostering Association opens the door to peer support and friendly group activities. This is a great way to access peer support on an everyday basis. Carers can share experiences, tips, and feel listened to.



Our buddy system

It's important you feel supported at all times and sometimes this support comes from our community of experienced foster carers. We buddy up new foster carers with an experienced carer for the first six months, so you can get advice from someone who has been in your shoes - especially leading up to and during your first placement. Beyond this new foster carers can join our New Carers Support Group who meet monthly in person and virtually. This is a great opportunity to get to know other local foster carers, share tips and advice as well as make new friends.



Awards to recognise your achievements

We think our foster carers should be recognised and thanked for the incredible work they do every day to change the lives of looked after children. We show just how much we appreciate our foster carers by shining a light on their amazing achievement through our annual awards and through our Foster Carer Forums that run throughout the year.

Join the community

Visit our website:

www.fosteringrotherham.com





The pathway to becoming a foster carer

Our unique pathway process means that we will work with you to find a personalised route into fostering for you and your family. This means you will feel fully informed and ready to start your fostering journey.

Find out if fostering is right for you

Your first step will be to have a chat with one of our team so they can answer your questions and share more about what it's like to foster with us. As part of your pathway to fostering, we will arrange a series of calls and face-to-face visits that work around you and your commitments. Each session gives us a chance to tailor information for you. We've got loads of resources, and can go into depth about different topics related to life as a foster carer.

Along the way, our team will check in with you to make sure there aren't any reasons why fostering wouldn't work for you at this time. These can be things such as not having a spare room, your work commitments or certain health issues.



Applying to foster with Fostering Rotherham

Read on to find out how to apply, but if you've already got some questions then why not book in for a chat with one of our fostering advisers? We're happy to chat to you as many times as you'd like so don't feel like you have to find out all the information in one call!

You can book your call here:
www.fosteringrotherham.com/book



Our application process is broken up into three stages:

- 1 Application**
- 2 Assessment**
- 3 Support and approval**



Because we support everyone through their own personal journey, the length of the application process will vary from family to family. This is because we always make sure we find the best possible outcome for you, your family and the children we support.

This can take as little as 4 months but will depend on your personal circumstances.

The process shouldn't take any longer than 6 months but if for any reason there is a delay, your assessing social worker will explain the reasons for this and work with you and your family to move at a pace that is right for you. We will be there for you every step of the way to offer support and advice. You'll always be welcome to contact us to ask any questions.



"I found the application and assessment to be very straightforward and well organised. I felt supported in a personal way through the process."

- Liz, Foster Carer





1

Application

When you feel ready to apply, we will help you to complete your application form. You'll be assigned a personal social worker to guide you through this.

2

Assessment

You're on your way to becoming a foster carer! Your social worker will continue to be with you throughout the assessment and you'll start to build a strong, trusting relationship as they help you to complete any paperwork that is required.

The assessment stage is also when you'll do your first piece of training. This is called **Skills to Foster™** and is led by our fostering team and existing foster carers. It's a really amazing opportunity to meet up with other members of Rotherham's fostering family and our foster carers often meet life-long friends on the course.



"The application process was intense but a great experience, we have met some amazing people and made great friends along the way."

- Zariah, Foster Carer

3

Support and approval

You'll know your social worker really well by now, so they'll be in an excellent position to work with you to prepare a Fostering Assessment Report.

Although your social worker will write the report you'll always be aware of what it contains and will contribute to its content. You'll then be invited to a Fostering Panel.



"The support we received from the social worker throughout the process was excellent. She explained everything thoroughly and supported us every step of the way. Her guidance and constant encouragement was invaluable."

- Simon, Foster Carer





Fostering Panels are made up of a range of people with experience of and expertise in fostering.

They always include someone who has personal experience of foster care, so either a foster carer or a person who is care-experienced. This means that there'll be someone there who will likely understand just how you're feeling.

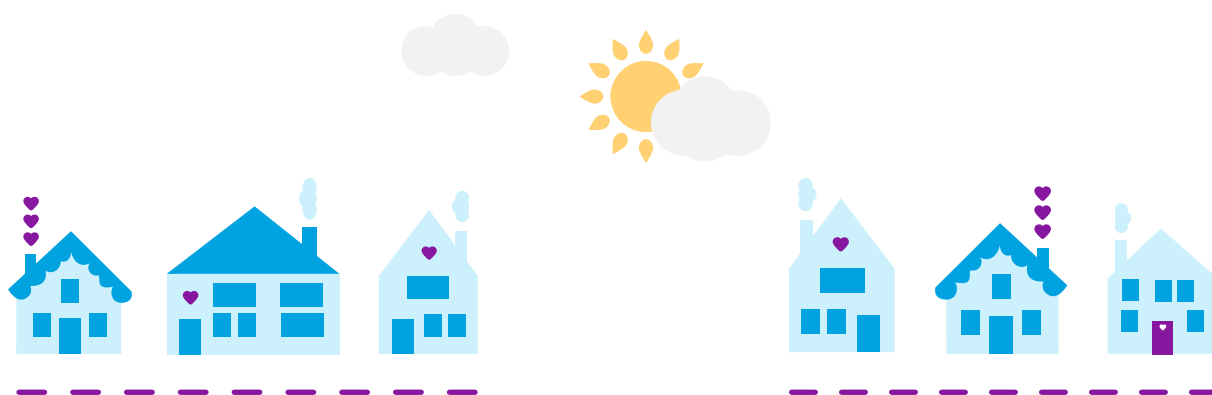
Panels can also contain social workers and other professionals such as teachers or nurses.

Although this may seem daunting, members of panels are keen to stress that this is not like a job interview. It's just a conversation aimed at getting to know you better to make sure that fostering is the right fit for you and to make sure that you have a support network to help you through your foster care journey.

Once you're approved as a foster carer, you will receive a welcome pack and your social worker will support you as you begin your journey as a foster carer. This will help you to settle into working with a new supervising social worker. You will then begin your induction into our amazing network of Rotherham foster carers.

As a newly approved foster carer your support doesn't stop there.

Read more about how we'll be here for you in your first few months and beyond by visiting our support pages: www.fosteringrotherham.com/support





Can I Foster?

Foster carers come from all walks of life and each person brings something special to what they do. We celebrate this diversity and believe it brings real strength to our foster carer community here in Rotherham.

There is no exact checklist for a perfect foster carer. What's important to us is that you care about children and their futures, that you're compassionate and patient and that you are willing to work with us to improve the lives of looked after children.

So whether you're a member of the LGBT+ community, are religious or not, currently work or are unemployed, are a homeowner or a renter, we encourage you to get in touch with our fostering advisers for a chat about how fostering could work for you.

You can book a call here: www.fosteringrotherham.com/book



There are only 5 basic criteria that must be met in order to foster with us:

1. You must be over the age of 21
2. You must have a spare bedroom*
3. You must live within 20 miles of the Rotherham boundary
4. If you are in a relationship you must have been together for 2 years or more and have been living together for at least 12 months.
5. You have the right to live and work in the UK

If you are unsure whether you are eligible to be a foster carer with us, one of our team can answer that for you today.

Simply give us a call on 01709 357370.

*There are clear National Minimum Standards which require a foster child to have their own room. The only exception to this is when fostering babies aged 0-2 and when there is a clear and timely path to a change of circumstance.

If your current home doesn't have a spare room there are a number of housing support schemes available to foster carers which may be an option for you. These are assessed on a case by case basis and during an introductory call our fostering team will be able to discuss this with you and explore the pathways to care which may be available.




Already a foster carer? Transfer to us

We would love to hear from you if you are an experienced foster carer who is committed to caring for children and young people in and around the Rotherham borough.

When you transfer to Fostering Rotherham, you are helping to reinvest time and resources into helping more local looked after children and continuously improving the community we love.

We know that making the decision to move from an agency is not something you do lightly and there will be various factors to consider, especially if you already have a child matched with you. So here are a few things to consider when you are thinking of transferring to Fostering Rotherham.

We always try and match our children with our in-house foster carers before we consider looking for a home match with an independent or private fostering agency, which means that you are unlikely to have gaps between home matches. This also means you are often more likely to receive opportunities to care for children from a wider variety of age ranges, with a different range of needs.



You could transfer to Fostering Rotherham in as little as 4 months. We have developed a streamlined transfer process to make this as smooth and as hassle free as possible. When you transfer to us, you will be rewarded and supported by our local teams, who collectively have over 200 years of experience working with families like yours.

Our dedicated placement team works closely with our social workers, so we can offer matches quickly, in the right homes for the looked after children.

If you already have a looked after child living in your home, we will match your rates and there will be no payment gaps during the transfer either. This lasts for the duration of the time the child is matched with you, and applies whether they are a Rotherham child or not.

As an experienced foster carer if you transfer to us with vacancies you will be paid automatically as a Level 3 carer, based on your experience, knowledge and commitment in the role.

Our Stepdown programme may provide opportunity for you to receive higher rates of payment.

If you would like to find out our transfer offer for existing carers then simply book a call back with one of our team today:

**www.fosteringrotherham.com/transfer
or call us on 01709 357370 today.**



80% of our foster carers recommend us, because...

- We offer round the clock support that you can access whenever you need it
- We tailor your pathway to foster based on your circumstances
- We have a close knit and experienced team- no long waits for approvals and matches
- Our team of advisers and social workers has over 200 years of combined experience working with local families
- We're home to 3 Mockingbird hubs which provide regular respite for foster carers and children
- When times get tough, we're on your side and have a professional team around you and the child in your care

**Are you somebody with existing experience working with children?
We offer a specialised pathway to shift your career to fostering.**

Read more here: www.fosteringrotherham.com/fostering-as-a-career



What's Next?

Now that you have read this information on fostering, if you require any further information or resources these can be found on our website www.fosteringrotherham.com.

We also hold regular fostering information sessions online and in person for you and your family to find out a bit more by talking to foster carers who already work with us.

We understand that the right time to foster is different for everyone, so whether you think you might be ready to foster now or you have further questions for our team, please get in touch today.

We are looking forward to speaking with you.



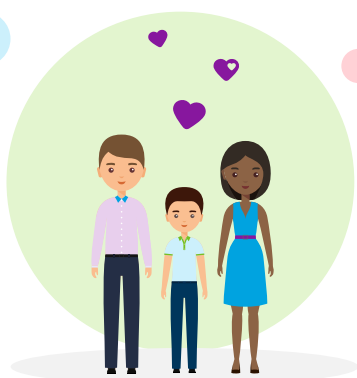
Website
www.fosteringrotherham.com/book



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Terms and conditions:
This document was last updated in December 2022.
We reserve the right to review and amend our rates at any time without prior notice.

fosteringrotherham.com

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council

