

Long-term foster care for children who need a forever home



Change lives
– foster for Derbyshire

Long-term fostering

We want to find long-term “forever homes” for some of the children in our care who need foster carers to look after them until they reach adulthood – and sometimes beyond.

This booklet will help you decide whether long-term fostering is right for you.



Why is long-term fostering needed?

Sometimes children come into care when they are older and adoption is not a viable option. However, these young people still need the stability of a loving, nurturing forever home.

Could long-term fostering be for you?

- Could you welcome a child into your home and give them the security and feeling of well-being that comes from being an accepted member of a new family?
- Do you have the temperament to look after children and be sensitive to their needs? Are you resilient and do you have the energy to look after children?
- Is your extended family network also able to accept these children as part of their family? Would they give support in the same way as they would for birth children?
- Would you prefer to look after children through various stages of development and into adulthood?

If you have answered yes to these questions, you could consider long-term fostering.

What we will offer you as a long-term foster carer

- Support from your own supervising social worker and local support groups
- Training in all aspects of fostering
- Free leisure pass for carers and their families
- Allowances towards birthdays, holidays, festivities and clothing
- Grant to buy IT equipment
- Monthly broadband contribution
- Generous library membership with no fines
- Car mileage
- E-newsletter
- Access to the Virtual School
- Involvement in service developments.

Some case studies of children who need long-term fostering.

Oliver and Charlie

We are brothers who want to stay together. We need a foster family where we can stay until we're grown up. I am the oldest and am seven. I am described by my current carer as being very polite but I can struggle socially. She says I like to interact with other children, although I have little concept of personal space and sometimes need to be reminded. I can have difficulty managing situations where I lose at a game and can become frustrated easily. I am diagnosed with ADHD and am on medication. I enjoy playing on electronic games but I sometimes get too excited and so my time on these is limited. I enjoy playing football or riding my bike and am very good at running.

My carer sums me up by saying: "He is a most loving child who craves Attention. He is misjudged as people don't initially see the terrified soul that lives within. Give him time, reassurance, answers, love and cuddles and you will see him blossom."

My brother is a lovely little boy who needs boundaries and structure. Our foster carer describes him as gorgeous and gregarious. He wears two hearing aids and glasses. He has a soft membrane over his cleft palette and needs his food cutting up small. He enjoys playing in the park or with Scalextric.

Our foster carer monitors what he watches on TV as certain things tend to frighten him.

He has little rituals, for example his socks have to be on just right before he can get dressed, and he nibbles around the edge of food, so meals take a long time.

Our foster carer sums him up by saying he is a livewire and very cute. Anybody looking after him has to be on their toes at all times.



Jake

My foster carers said I am “a lovely, caring boy who is very smiley”. They were short-term carers and so I had to move. Since then I have had a few moves. This has really upset me, but has been because of other difficult circumstances and I have been reassured it is not my fault.

I enjoy playing games on my X-box. I love swimming and bouncing on trampolines. I also like watching Disney films.

I have recently been excluded from school and have been upset about this as I enjoyed school. I had quite a few friends and my teacher had said I mix well with other children, but I had been in the ‘nurture’ group (for extra support) a lot of the time. I do not always find schoolwork easy. The Virtual School is currently supporting my education until another school can be sorted.

I do like to be praised and I especially like positive adult attention. I sometimes need things explaining to me a few times as I can lack confidence.

I am able to do most things myself now and am happy to keep clean but sometimes I need to be reminded as I didn’t get into a routine when I was younger.

I have two sisters and two brothers. I choose not to have contact with my birth parents and social workers support me with this decision. Horizons (an NHS psychology service for children in care) is involved and will help my new foster carers to support me.



Anna

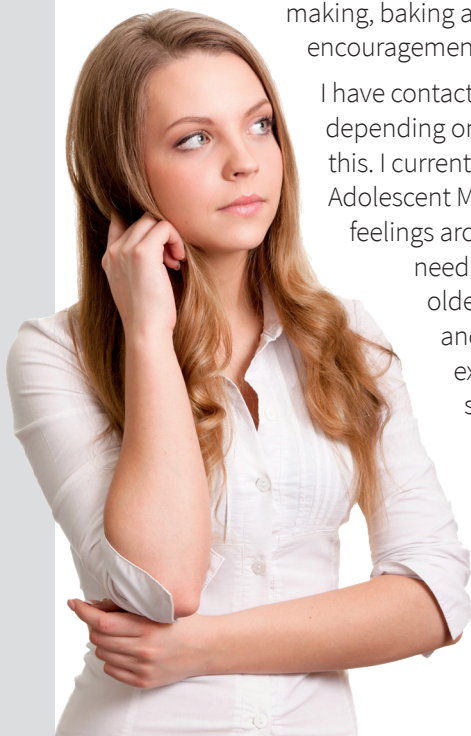
I have had a difficult time at home recently due to circumstances beyond my control. Although I hoped I would be able to return home this is now looking less likely. I therefore need a stable and long-term placement where my basic needs can be met.

I am described as a strong-minded, engaging and funny girl, articulate and caring. I am sociable and generally quite happy around people. I am quite self-sufficient and sometimes need my own personal space but also enjoy attention and can be affectionate. I sometimes find it easier to hide and suppress my feelings rather than talking about them and probably need some encouragement with this. I love my iPhone and always have it with me.

My current foster carers say I am a typical teenager who thinks I know a lot. They also say I am bright and logical and have a good understanding of how things work. They think I am resilient and could do really well at school.

I am quite good at sports and enjoy craft activities like candle making, baking and sewing. I like food but need a little encouragement to eat healthily.

I have contact with my mum twice a week and, depending on where I live, I may need support around this. I currently have input from CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) to address my feelings around my experiences at home. It is felt I need a carer who has experience of managing older children, who is patient and nurturing, and able to give me time and space to express my emotions. My social worker says I am a pleasant and engaging young person.



Being a long-term foster carer

Foster care can be rewarding and fun – sharing activities and developing relationships. Offering the one-to-one care and attention and seeing the progress a child makes is enjoyable and rewarding.

Just as the children who need foster care are all unique, there is no typical carer. We positively welcome applicants from all walks of life. We do not discriminate on the grounds of disability, age, gender, sexuality, marital status, race or religion.

How to apply

The assessment takes about six months and you will be guided through the whole process. Once approved, we'll provide ongoing support, training and incentives.

Long-term foster carers are approved in the same way as other foster carers and are assessed to the same standard.

You can contact us for more information or to start the application process in a number of ways:

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/fostering

Call Derbyshire free on **0800 083 7744**

email **fostering@derbyshire.gov.uk**

However you choose to contact us, Call Derbyshire will ask you to provide basic information and will then send you some information to read and invite you to the next Talk Fostering event, where you can discuss long-term fostering with a member of the team.



Call Derbyshire for free
0800 083 77 44
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