

Supporting you every step of the way

Foster with us

# FOSTER CARE FACT SHEETS



Northumberland  
County Council

[www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

## What is Fostering?

Fostering is looking after someone else's children temporarily when it's not possible for them to live with their own family. This could happen for several reasons:

- neglect or abuse by parents or other family members
- adolescents in need of structure, boundaries & support
- parent's serious illness, including mental health issues, where support is needed
- problems with relationships - parents & children need a break
- moving into a family environment from residential children's homes
- asylum seekers
- supporting short breaks for children with disabilities and their families

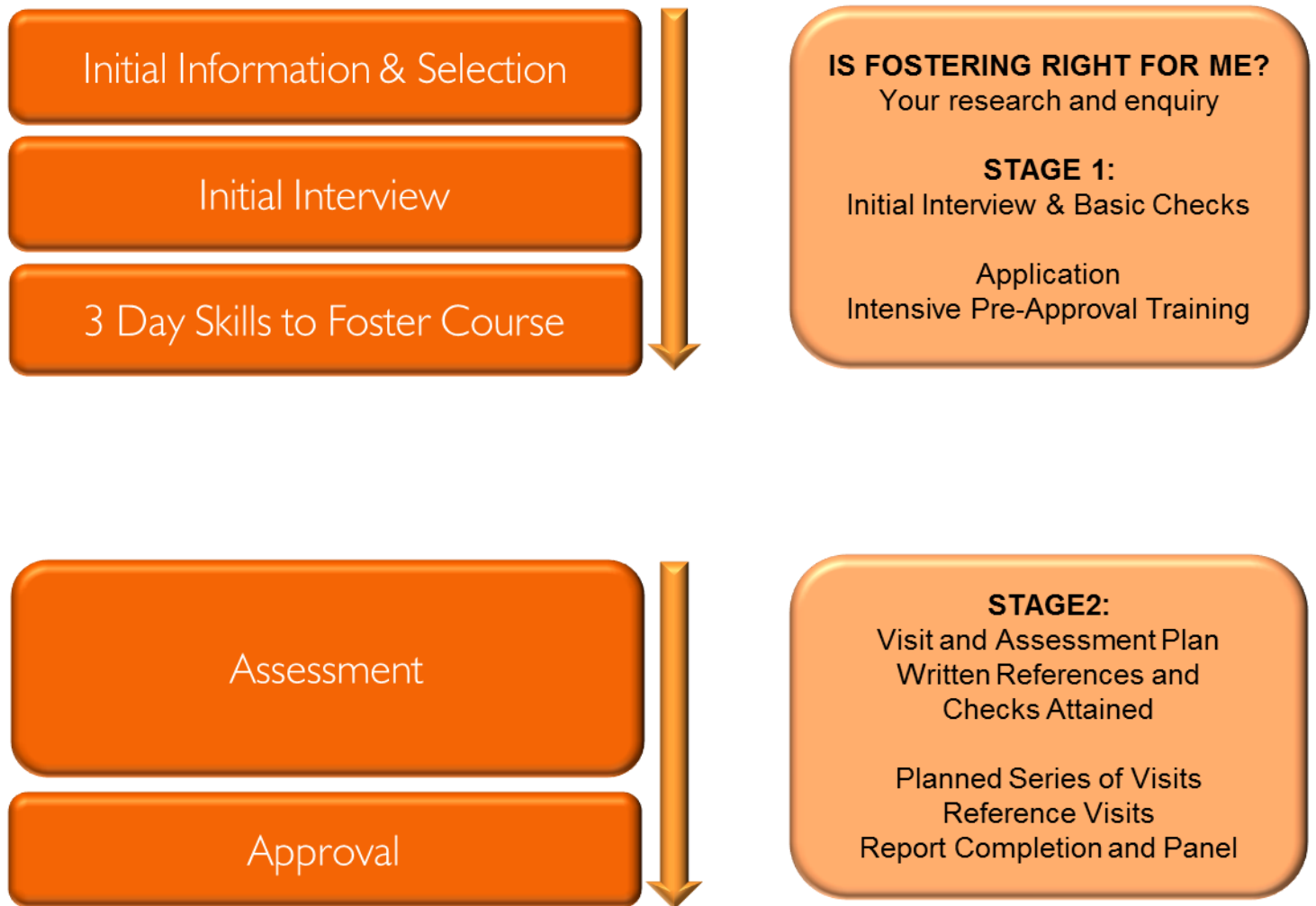
The foster carer is responsible for the child's every day care needs and welfare. You work with the local authority and/or the parents regarding major decisions made about the child, involving the child where appropriate.

The aim ultimately is to help children return to their families; this may mean getting back with their parents, or helping them to move in with a member of their wider birth family such as a grandparent, aunt or uncle. If this is not possible, you will help them to move to an adoptive or permanent foster family.

Whatever age children our foster carers look after, they all have an important role to play. We may be helping a child or young person work through extraordinary times in their lives; all ages of children and young people can bring different rewards and challenges to the foster carer. Those caring for very young children do a vital job of getting the children into daily routines and help support child development. Then at the other end of the age scale, the teenage years are when most young people are finding their feet, often testing out their boundaries. The rewards of helping a young person to develop confidence, prepare for independence and make plans for the future often outweigh the challenges.

You can help reduce the UK shortage of foster carers by becoming a Northumberland Foster Carer.

# The Recruitment Process:



# Types of Fostering:

There are different types of foster care that you can provide for children and young people depending on their individual needs. With advice and guidance from our fostering team you can choose which type (s) of care would be best for you.

## **Time Limited Foster Care:**

It ranges from a few nights to up to 3 years depending on the child's care plan. It's for all ages of children and young people. Time limited foster carers can offer emergency beds to help a family or foster family over a crisis, but their main function is to provide intermediate placements; helping the children to return home or move in with a new permanent family.

## **Long Term or Permanent Foster Care:**

Sometimes children will not be able to return to live with their own families. Most of these children are aged between 6 and 12 years old when they come to stay with their long term foster family. Long term fostering is often the right type of family for a child; over a return to their birth family or being adopted. It allows a child to grow up in a safe and supported family environment while retaining the connection with their birth family. Often new long term foster carers will work on a concurrent basis, where they start off providing short term placements for children, with a view to a suitable long term match with a child.

## **Sibling Foster Care:**

Our children and young people have told us that staying together is very important to brothers and sisters who have had changes in their lives. They need the security and comfort of each other, as much as they need you. Sometimes it is best for siblings to live separately while we help them work through things in their lives; however, we are always looking to recruit people to look after sibling groups. If you have the physical space in your home, please do give consideration to helping us achieve this for our children and young people.



# Types of Fostering:

## **Emergency 24 / 7 Foster Care:**

This scheme aims to support school age children in placements for up to 6 weeks while we work with the child to decide on the best possible living arrangement. Foster carers on this scheme will have a significant amount of previous work experience, either from foster care or other roles working directly with children and young people.

## **Mother and Baby or Parent and Child Foster Care:**

Some foster carers offer support to a parent (mother or father) who is experiencing difficulties. The majority of the time this will mean offering a home to mothers (aged both under and over 18 years of age) and their baby. They will:

Help the parent learn and develop their parenting skills and responsibilities

Have an important role observing and recording how the parent looks after the child

May provide parental care, if required, for the child



## **Short Break or Respite Foster Care:**

These terms are interchangeable between different agencies. A carer may be providing a service to one child or to several children on consecutive weekends. In Northumberland, the terms are split as follows:

- **Respite care**

Respite can be offered for both families in the community, who need that extra bit of support at particular times, as well as other foster families. This is usually for weekend or holiday placements for children and young people, but can occasionally be required for weekdays. These stays may be planned during regular breaks and / or ad-hoc breaks to support children and families.

- **Short breaks for children with disabilities**

Our short-break care service offers respite to local families who have disabled children. By planning ahead and giving their children regular short breaks with the same foster carer, the families are more able to care for their own children long term. Short breaks are usually 2 or 3 days. Some occur weekly, others monthly and some just in the school holidays. This form of foster care can suit people who are not in a position to offer full-time care.

# What makes a good foster carer?

Many different kinds of people make good foster carers – just like the children and young people who need to be looked after, they come from all walks of life. However, all foster carers have one thing in common – they can offer stability and a secure, loving home for children and young people. You can foster:

- Whether you are married, single, gay or straight
- Whatever your ethnicity, culture or religion
- Whether you do or don't have children
- Whether you work or are unemployed
- As long as you are reasonably fit, and have the energy to care for children.
- Whether you live in Northumberland or the nearby surrounding areas
- Whether you own or rent your home – as long as you have a spare bedroom and enough room to care for a child in a safe, clean and secure environment.

## **A good foster carer will:**

- Have relevant life experience and care skills either personally or professionally
- Have enough time to meet the needs of the children and young people
- Understand that fostering can be very challenging
- Be committed to making a difference to children's lives
- Be able to provide children with a nurturing and positive family environment
- Enjoy looking after children and young people
- Be able to adapt to different needs and situations
- Be able to work as part of a large and varied team
- Value and respect differences
- Be patient, resilient, resourceful and flexible
- Have a sense of humour



## 'Jay' the foster carer

Our young people created 'Jay' the Foster Carer.

'Jay' has the qualities that helps fostered children and young people to thrive



# Why Foster for Northumberland Foster Care?

## **As a Northumberland Foster Carer you will:**

- Make a difference to the lives of local children, young people and their families
- Provide a much valued and needed service for local children and families as children should ideally stay in their home area
- Work directly for a local council and the families that it supports; helping to save money which can be ploughed directly back into local services

## **We provide you with:**

- A dedicated fostering team on hand to help you deal with anything that crops up
- Local support groups and a network of foster families—A Buddy mentor scheme
- 24 hour emergency telephone support
- A guaranteed fee paid 52 weeks of the year
- 28 Days Paid Breaks—Tax exemptions apply to payments—Paid mileage and equipment supplied
- Northumberland Foster Families benefit from the [Max Card Scheme](#) - discounts for activities and venues
- Free training and skills development programme
- Membership and additional benefits with our partner [Foster Talk](#)
- Discounted Access to Leisure for Northumberland Looked After Children and their foster families from Active Northumberland
- Individual input for children's education, health, 16 Plus, mental health and advocacy

## READY to proceed? Next steps

If you've read our information and visited our web site—would you like to get the ball rolling and start the recruitment process?

When you are ready to take the next step – **please call or email to request a callback**. If we have not already spoken, our recruitment team will be in touch to take some basic details and answer any questions.

We realise that it's not always the right time for people to start fostering. Please be reassured that you are under no obligation to continue the recruitment process at any stage if you decide that it is not the right time, or if indeed fostering is not for you at all. The team are here to support and guide you every step of the way throughout the recruitment process and beyond. Please pass this information on to friends and family who may consider fostering too.

### Office Address and Details:

Family Placement Service, Northumberland County Council, 3 Esther Court, Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington, NE63 8AP

Tel: 01670 62 62 62

Email: [foster@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:foster@northumberland.gov.uk)

If emailing us for the first time, please include your: Full Name / Address (including postcode) / Phone number

### Useful websites:

Northumberland Foster Care [www.northumberland.gov.uk/foster](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/foster)

Foster Talk [www.fostertalk.org](http://www.fostertalk.org)

The Fostering Network [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

Coram BAAF (British Association for Adoption and Fostering) [www.corambaaf.org.uk](http://www.corambaaf.org.uk)

Ofsted <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>

