

WORCESTERSHIRE  
**CHILDREN FIRST**  
Fostering



# Specialist Foster Care: Fostering our Next Generation

*Making a difference to the lives of  
children and young people in Worcestershire*

  
**Ofsted**  
Good  
Provider

# WHAT IS WORCESTERSHIRE SPECIALIST FOSTERING?

We value family life for all children and we work to keep children in a family care environment even if this can't be with their birth parents.

Family care for some children means Foster Care.


Worcestershire Specialist Fostering is an opportunity to provide short term, long term, or a permanent family home for a child or young person aged 5-18 years old.

Whilst residential care has its place for some children we aim to prevent this or make it short term and wherever possible move children into a fostering family when it is identified as in their best interests.

We know some children need extra special care so we have developed Worcestershire Specialist Fostering. We will match you with your foster child with care and thorough, thoughtful introductions. We will provide specialist, focused training and offer a range of routine and individual support. You will also receive a high level of operational support and management oversight.

In February 2023, Worcestershire Children First Fostering were recognised as 'Good Providers' by Ofsted.

## **Ofsted said:**



**Children are happy and settled with their kinship and foster families and have trusting relationships**

**Children are appropriately matched with Foster Carers**

**Children feel part of their kinship and foster families because carers are committed to meeting their needs**



# WHAT YOU NEED TO BE A WORCESTERSHIRE SPECIALIST FOSTER CARER

You might have skills developed in previous professional roles or gained from your own experiences of parenting. Working with or caring for vulnerable children or young people with complex physical, emotional or behavioural needs are experiences that may benefit this type of fostering. You might have lived experience or previous fostering experience, or have significant experience living and caring for vulnerable children or young people who have complex needs.

We will consider couples or individuals with or without other children in the household. This has and can work well with settled children who feel secure within the family. We would work with you to look at the potential impact upon any other children and the change to their family to make this work for everyone.

## THE YOUNG PEOPLE

- Children and young people aged 5 - 18 years
- The child or young person will have experienced a number of challenges in their family life and will have experienced some kind of abuse, neglect, separation and rejection. These traumas will mean they have a range of needs and complexities that require a specialist skilled foster carer. They will need a higher level of care, support and nurture to support them to make a real difference to their lives and future.
- They are likely to have already experienced multiple moves and changes in their lives which could include placement disruptions/moves, changes with education and friendship breakdowns as a result. This may have impacted on their ability to trust adults and initially settle.
- Due to their life experiences and the emotional impact this will have had on them they may express their traumas through behaviours that may be a challenge including self-harm and/or violent behaviour towards themselves and/or others.
- Many children and young people can, once settled, show very different needs and behaviours when they are in safe caring families to those exhibited when they are feeling unsafe or uncared for.

## SUPPORT FOR FOSTER CARERS

Foster carers will receive full and detailed information regarding each child / young person as part of the Matching Process.

There will be fortnightly supervision with your supervising social worker.

The child's social worker and your own social worker will co-ordinate their work and visits and ensure you have all the information and support you both need to make the placement a success.

There will be regular group/peer supervision sessions with other foster carers and specialist foster carers.

Regular Core Group and the Looked after Children's Reviews will evaluate progress of the children & young people placed with you and ensure the multi agency group of professionals are in place.

Support will be available from our Anchor (emotional health and wellbeing service) and our virtual head and educational service.

There is also the offer of additional support from our Fostering Support Worker as and when needed.

There will be planned, respite care as part of the child/young person's Care Plan.

You will have free membership to Foster Talk and access to Foster Talk Members 24 hr Helpline.

## THE REWARDS

- Making a difference to the life of a vulnerable child or young person.
- You will be a valued member of the professional team around the child.
- Ongoing professional development and training.
- A enhanced fee payment (£1000.00 per week plus age allowance). The fee £1000.00 p/w and allowance £175 p/w for ages 5-10 will bring the total weekly payment to £1175.00. This equates to £62,100 per annum rising with the age of the child to £62,556 for children aged 11-15 and £64,324 for 16-17 year olds.
- Payments made from the date the match is agreed.
- 50% of the fee will be paid during the 2 week Induction Period, and 50% of the fee will be paid for 2 weeks following the placement ending.

## CASE STUDY: ASHLEY ELLIS

I am Ashley Ellis and I have been a specialist teenage foster carer for the past 3 years. I was in care myself and lived at Downsell Road when it was a Children's Home. I was also raised by my grandmother. My early life experiences are one of the main reasons I wanted to become a foster carer.

As an adult I worked for 20 years in Downsell Road with older young people and most of the residential homes across Worcestershire. I have 4 birth children of my own and worked full time whilst bringing up my children as a single mother. At one point my daughter's friend lived with us for 7 years as well. I decided to leave my role as a residential worker four years ago, because I wanted to care for young people in a more personal way, rather than in shifts. I remember thinking I would have loved to take some of these children I was working with home with me.

I generally foster 14 or 15-year-olds. I like teenagers because they are at a stage in their lives where they are finding themselves and I like being part of that journey.

It can be difficult for children who experience trauma and loss in their teenage years, but I enjoy being part of that transition. You need to be consistent and strong, as they often feel they are falling apart inside.

My social worker gets back to me quickly and is always there for me. She is a highly experienced person and we regularly talk in a lot of detail about placements. The best thing you can ever have as a foster carer is a sense of humour. You need to be very broad minded and having attachment training is crucial because you have to remember these children were created and you've got to try and unravel some of their layers. You have to look beyond the behaviours that may challenge you and remember them when they were younger. I often do this by looking at photos of them when they were much younger, you can see they have often experienced a very frightening world.





# YOUNG PERSON CASE STUDY

## Successfully moving from Residential Care to a Fostering home

Jay\* aged 12 was living in a residential care home following the breakdown of a previous foster placement where he had lived with his younger sister. Although another foster home was preferred it was not possible to find one for him and he moved to live in a residential home.

He is part of a sibling group of three and his brother had been placed separately to Jay and their sister, which was planned following a sibling assessment that indicated that separation was in their best interests.

During the time Jay was placed in residential care (between May 2022 and September 2023) the time he spent with his brother was increased which improved their relationship. With the support of his brother's foster carers, Jay was able to enjoy family life for extended periods during the school breaks with his brother. He was always of the view he wanted to live with foster carers.

We saw in residential care behaviours that were new for Jay, which appeared to be a result of the inconsistent care givers in a residential setting. This re-affirmed the view that he needed to be living in a family environment. His brother's foster carers became part of the team around Jay and worked together building their relationships before planning for Jay to move to live with them. This helped the foster carers understand Jay and what he needed from them.

Not only did Jay return to living in a family, but he was also reunified with his brother, and he has adapted well to the change. What helped was a gradual and slow transition where he and the foster carers understood one another before he moved for good.

*\*name has been changed*



## USEFUL CONTACTS:



### **Foster Talk:**

0121 758 5013

Monday-Friday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm (excluding bank holidays).

WCFF pay a membership for foster carers to access all of the support services available through Foster Talk.



### **WCFF SMILE Groups**

We provide monthly support groups in the community for our foster carers to attend to build their fostering network and support one another. Online smile groups are also held for our family and friends foster carers that live out of county.



### **WCFF - Facebook Foster Carer Group**

We have a private WCFF Facebook Group you can request to join.



### **Family Rights Group**

[www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)

The Family Rights Group promotes policies and practices that keep children safe within their family and strengthen the family and community networks of those children who cannot live at home.



[worcestershirefostering.co.uk](http://worcestershirefostering.co.uk)  
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