

# FOSTERING

With Brighton & Hove City Council

[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fostering)



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Brighton & Hove  
City Council

FIRSTLY,  
A GREAT BIG

# Thank you

**for getting in  
touch with us  
about becoming  
a foster carer!**

Our foster carers at Brighton & Hove City council are part of a team of childcare professionals working hard to support our children in our care. We will be here to offer advice, support and training every step of the way.





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All you need to know about fostering for Brighton & Hove City Council



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## What is a foster carer?

**Foster carers provide a safe, stable, nurturing home for a child or young person who cannot live at home with their family.**

Children come into foster care for many reasons. It may be because of a family illness, family breakdown or problems at home. Many will have experienced neglect and physical, emotional or sexual abuse.

Every child's story is different, but they will all have had a difficult start in life and have faced loss and separation from their birth family at some point.

**"You're helping these young people find their place in the world"** LYDIA, 32





## Who can be a foster carer?

**There is no such thing as a typical foster carer!  
You can be single, married, in a same-sex relationship,  
living with a partner or in a civil partnership.**

You do not need to own your home – you can foster if you are renting however you must have a spare room.

You do not need to have your own children, but you do need to have significant childcare experience.

You can be a foster carer if your own children are still living with you.

There is no maximum age to foster, but people who apply must be in good health physically and mentally.

**“You’re giving  
children their  
childhood back”**

JEFF, 53



## What do you need to become a foster carer?

**You need a spare bedroom, significant childcare experience, time and space in your life and a big heart.**

Like the children they look after, foster carers come from all sorts of different backgrounds, cultures, religions and age groups.

What our carers have in common is a genuine interest in helping support children through a difficult time in their lives.

You will need sensitivity and flexibility, as well as an ability to stick with children who may be troubled or display difficult behaviour at times. A sense of humour helps too!

**"They made me feel  
at home immediately"**

KARA, 16



# Skills & qualities

## Foster carers need to be able to:

- Provide a good standard of care for other people's children. This involves promoting their health, education and leisure interests
- Listen to and communicate with children in a way that is appropriate for their age and understanding
- Help the child keep in contact with their friends and family as appropriate
- Set appropriate boundaries and manage children's behaviour without the use of physical punishment
- Ensure that the child is cared for in an environment where they are safe from harm and abuse
- Work as part of a team with the child's social worker, teachers and other professionals
- Provide a stable home that can give the child the warmth and stability they need
- Have a positive attitude to diversity and equality issues
- Have a sense of humour!



**"They took care  
of the things  
I needed and  
wanted"** LUKE, 13

# Why foster for Brighton & Hove City Council?

- Our fostering team provides 24-hour support, seven days a week, 365 days a year, to all our foster carers. So you're never on your own
- We provide excellent ongoing training and regular support groups held locally within the city
- We have a vibrant fostering community and plenty of opportunities to meet other carers for friendship, advice and support
- We offer events and activities for foster children throughout the holidays
- We pay very competitive rates
- We are part of the council's wider children's social services team, and are based in the team's main centre. This means we have the closest possible links with the other professionals working with the child and their birth family
- We also have very strong local links with the schools our children attend
- Our Fostering Support Team is a group of fun, friendly and highly skilled professionals who work directly with children in our care. They help our young people to get more from life, and help make fostering a joyful and rewarding experience for our carers.
- You'll foster local children and our priority is to identify Brighton and Hove City Council approved foster carers for our local children

**"We just get on with each other and make each other laugh"**

HAYDEN, 8





# How to become a Brighton & Hove City Council foster carer

## Taking the time to get it right

It takes time to make sure all our foster carers are the right people to look after our children. The process for becoming an approved foster carer normally takes six to eight months.

For obvious child protection reasons we have to check your background out in some detail.

There is also a certain amount of training we need you to undertake.

## So before you can foster we will need:

- References from employers, ex partners who were involved in childcare and your own children who have left home
- References from six people who can tell us about your ability to care for a child
- A disclosure and barring check (previously known as a CRB check)
- To contact your GP and other organisations you have contact with such as schools and health visitors
- A full medical – which we will pay for
- To talk to other family members in your home including your children to make sure that fostering is right for them

These checks form part of a wider assessment that we will carry out with you.

We also ask you to take part in our three-day training course called 'Skills to Foster'.

We allocate you a social worker who visits you in your home for around 8-10 sessions of about 2 hours over a number of months.

The social worker will talk to you about your own background, childhood, relationships, childcare experience, major life events – and why you want to foster.

At the end of the assessment we will write a report called 'Form F' using the information that you have given us.

You will be able to see what we have written about you and comment on it.

This report is presented to a fostering panel, which decides whether or not you should be approved.

If you decide at any point that fostering is not for you, you can stop the process at any time

And if we think there are reasons why you shouldn't be a foster carer we can stop the process too.

# Is this the **right time** for you?

Fostering is rewarding and can be good fun but it also requires patience and commitment.

It's important that you think about whether this is the right time for you.

With that in mind please consider the following:

- Have you recently had a major life event such as bereavement?
- Are your own children going through any big changes such as GCSEs or starting school?
- Do you have young children or a baby at home already?
- Are you providing support for other family members such as elderly relatives?
- Have you recently moved or are you thinking of moving?

None of these things will stop you from fostering but we do suggest you have a chat with us if any of these are applicable to you.

**"You need to be understanding of what someone else is going through"**

KATIE, 15





# The different types of fostering

## Short Term Foster care

Usually when a child first comes into foster care, they will be placed in a short term placement. Depending on the child's circumstances, a short term placement can last from a few days to several years.

## Long term foster care

Some children can't return to their birth family and may be placed in long term foster care until they are ready to live independently.

## Respite

Respite care could be for as little as one weekend per month or during the school holidays. Respite care can give parents or other foster carers a break and can prevent a breakdown in the family.

## Parent and child placements

This is a very specific type of fostering; you need to be an experienced foster carer and we provide additional training. The foster carer provides supervision, advice and support and works with the parent to help them look after their child independently wherever possible.

## Supported lodgings

Some young people are ready to move on from foster care when they are 16 but still need help and support before they are fully ready to live independently. Supported lodgings carers can play a key role helping young people to prepare for independence.



WHAT ARE YOU  
WAITING FOR?

**Get in touch**

**We would love to speak to you and we have a friendly, knowledgeable team waiting to hear from you. To get in touch with us, please:**

- > Call us for a friendly chat on (01273) 295444**
- > Send an email to [fostering@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@brighton-hove.gov.uk)**
- > Visit our website at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fostering)**



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