

# Could you foster for South Gloucestershire?



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

## What is fostering?

Fostering can be one of the most rewarding opportunities anyone can give to a child in need of care at what can be a vulnerable time in their young life.

Fostering is first and foremost about providing a home for a child and including them in your family. It's about showing them that you care and are there for them.

Fostering involves many tasks, including day to day care and ensuring the range of a child or young person's needs are met. It also includes meetings with social workers and other professionals involved in a child's life.

Foster carers are often required to facilitate contact between children and their families and have a vital role to play in helping the child or young person maintain close links to people that are important to them.

But most importantly its about being there, having time for them and caring for them at what can be a very uncertain time in their life.

## Why do we need foster carers?

There are always children in South Gloucestershire who will need to be fostered. At the moment there are not enough foster carers in South Gloucestershire to ensure that each child can be placed within their community close to their school and family.

There can be a number of reasons why children need to be fostered. Many children will have experienced abuse or neglect. Their parents may have also had difficulty with drugs or alcohol misuse or mental health issues, some children may have experienced a family crisis and care is the only option for them at that time.

Whatever the reason, each child needs a family home that they are part of and where they feel cared for, safe and listened to.

Having a child cared for by a foster carer close to their family, friends and school is very important and can make all the difference.

At South Gloucestershire we want to make sure every child has the chance to be looked after by local carers who can support a child at this critical time.

## Could I foster?

Have you ever thought about fostering an older child? Maybe you have but you just don't think you're suitable for whatever reason.

You'd be surprised. Foster carers of all ages and from every walk of life are needed in South Gloucestershire to care for children of all ages but particularly older children, siblings and teenagers.

You could be a family, a couple, single male or female, a same-sex couple, a homeowner or renting. Whether you work or not, as long as you have the time, energy, space and flexibility to be there for a child, young person or siblings, we'd like to hear from you.

Some children might have additional needs, such as physical disabilities or learning difficulties, but above all they need the same care and love that any child needs.

As long as you, or one of you if you are a couple, are able to be available for the needs of a child you can apply to become a foster carer.

No matter what you think a foster carer is or does, why not give us a call to have a chat about how you could become one? You might be surprised.

# What are the different types of fostering?

Children needing to be fostered come from all types of backgrounds and have different needs. No child is ever the same.

It might be a teenager or siblings needing somewhere to go while a family issue is resolved, a family with an older child with a disability needing some respite, or a more long-term solution for an older child. Each child's circumstances are different.

And just as every child's situation may be different, there are different forms of fostering. There is short-term fostering which might be for a couple of days, or months or maybe even up to two years. We also need permanent family homes for children who are unable to return to their family and need to remain in care. We are also looking for carers who can provide emergency care or respite – your social worker will work with you to agree the right type of fostering for you and your family.

Above all, foster carers are provided with a range of support and training to help them care for such children – it's part of a team effort. You'll never feel alone, isolated or unsure. We want to ensure that the welfare of all of our children and carers is paramount.



## Can I afford to foster?

While fostering is a rewarding experience we understand and appreciate that there are costs involved, in addition to the enormous amount of time and effort put in by carers.

We want to ensure that foster carers have the necessary financial support to provide the care, support and attention that a child needs.

Foster carers are provided with an age related fostering allowance. This allowance covers the cost of caring for a child: food, clothing, pocket money, heating and other household expenses, leisure activities and normal day to day expenses involved in caring for a child.

Foster carers receive a fostering fee and the amount varies depending on their experience and the age and needs of the child in placement.

There are also allowances for holidays and birthdays as well as special payments where a child has specific additional or exceptional needs. Carers are also entitled to holiday pay for up to 14 days each year.

# How do I become a foster carer?

Becoming a foster carer isn't as difficult as you might think. The process is clear and straightforward and the team from South Gloucestershire will guide and help you.

After an initial chat and if you want to find out more, a social worker will contact you and provide you with more information about fostering:

## **Step 1**

You will be invited to attend an information evening where you will learn more about fostering in order to think through whether fostering is right for you and your family.

## **Step 2**

After the information evening you will be offered a home visit by a social worker to discuss why you want to become a foster carer and be asked to fill in part one of the application form.

## **Step 3**

You'll be offered a place on a Skills to Fostering course which forms part of your application. Your children will also be asked their views to make sure that fostering is right for you and your family. After this, you'll know if you've been accepted to proceed with your application.

## **Step 4**

You'll undertake a home study and assessment to ensure you are suitable and meet the national standards required to foster. This can take several months but is needed to ensure you are right for the role.

## **Step 5**

Checks and references will be made and then a social worker will submit a report to an independent fostering panel. You can comment on the report before it is submitted.

## **Step 6**

If approved, you'll be registered as a foster carer for South Gloucestershire.



## What support will I receive?

As a foster carer, you will receive regular visits from a fostering social worker who will provide advice guidance and support. You will also in your first year of fostering receive support from an experienced foster carer who will act as your 'buddy.'

Foster carers have access to an out of hours helpline and are provided with a wide range of training and development opportunities to help them meet the needs of children and young people in their care.

There is an active Foster Care Association in South Gloucestershire, and foster carers are also provided with free membership of Fostering Network.

Details of the Fostering Network are available at [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

### **Interested?**

**Contact South Gloucestershire Council's fostering team on  
01454 866 423**

### **Alternatively...**

**email [fostering@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@southglos.gov.uk)  
or visit our website at  
[www.southglos.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/fostering)**

**Make a difference to a child.**