



Fostering for Adoption

With you every step of the way

Fosterline
0800 040 7675
your fostering advice service

www.fosterline.info



Fostering for Adoption is aimed at ensuring that more children can be placed with their potential permanent carers on a fostering basis while the local authority seeks a placement order from the courts. A child can wait two years or more to be placed with an adoptive family. The government pledged to simplify and speed up the adoption process. These new plans will see babies placed with approved adopters who will foster first, and help provide a stable home at a much earlier stage in a child's life.

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a new duty on local authorities to consider placing looked after children for whom the local authority is considering adoption with foster carers who are also approved prospective adopters.

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When might Fostering for Adoption Apply?

When children are placed in the care of the local authority they have a duty to explore all possible outcomes for the child and produce a child-centered plan to the court. In some circumstances the child may not be able to return to their birth family and a permanent option will need to be explored and evidenced. A foster placement in usual circumstances is assumed to balance the needs of the child for a strong sense of commitment from the foster carers while recognising that this commitment and core relationship in most circumstances will be brought to an end. Foster for adoption placements are sought for when a child is unable to return to the family and adoption is the preferred form of legal permanency. Placing a child in a foster for adopt arrangement is intended to avoid disruption, until the court authorises the adoption placement, the placement with the dually approved carers is a temporary placement made under fostering regulations.

Fostering for adoption is intended to minimise numerous placement moves

Why foster for adoption?

Fostering for adoption provides a child with a level of consistent uninterrupted stable care while the local authority fully explore its responsibilities to engage with birth parents and family in identifying solutions and placement options in a similar way to standard foster care but with the possibility of the carers adopting the child once all responsibilities of the local authority have been discharged and evidenced. The result would be the carers being granted an adoption order for the child they are currently fostering

Fostering for adopt protects children from experiencing multiple moves within the care system.

How does it work?

Approved adopters who are also approved as temporary foster carers will have a baby or child placed with them to provide the day to day care for the child. The carers will continue to work with the child's social worker to ensure the child's needs are met. The child's social worker will also be continuing the assessment of the birth family and monitoring improvements and change. The court will have the final decision and make a ruling on the care plan for the child. In the case of adoption the carers will go to adoption panel to become adopters.

Alternatively, if the Court decides that the child should be returned to their birth family then the child is returned.

Why fostering for adoption benefits the child

Children have the opportunity to form strong attachments with their potential permanent family from an early stage. Foster for adoption carers are able to make strong attachments and commitments to the child even though they are aware that the child may return to a family member.

Even after the child has been adopted by the carers there is the possibility for the child to retain supervised contact with birth family members

Why carers benefit from fostering for adoption

Foster for adopt carers can be involved with providing stability and security for the child at their early stage of development. Many adopters will have missed out on these stages by adopting via the traditional route. The foster for adopt carers will be supported by a foster for adopt social worker proffering advice and support and will also receive training, They will continue to offer support up until the point of an adoption matching panel or if the child leaves the foster for adopt placement.

Do fostering for adoption carers get paid?

Yes, carers who foster to adopt will receive a weekly fostering allowance for the child and will be entitled to adoption leave. The child remains a 'child in care', so carers will not be able to claim child benefit. It is advisable that foster for adopt carers, if employed, speak to their employer to ensure their full entitlements. Fostering allowances will cease once the placement has been agreed at adoption matching panel or the child returns to their birth family or placed in an alternative placement with family friends etc.

Becoming an approved fostering for adoption carer

Fostering for adopt carers are approved adopters who have the skills, emotional resilience and willingness to be able to offer a child a loving and nurturing home whilst living with the uncertainty that the child may be returned to their birth family.

During the prospective adopter's assessment you and an appointed social worker will be able to discuss if you and your family have the special qualities needed to offer a foster for adopt placement for a child. The social worker will record your views and their recommendation in a report. Fostering to adoption is not suitable for everybody.

Fostering for adoption is not a generic assessment, applicants to foster for adoption are approved following an assessment of the capacity of the carers to meet the needs of the child.

Once an approved adopter, you will receive information about children needing foster for adopt placements. Information will be shared with you about the child; usually this includes information about their health, development, birth family history and the reasons why they are unable to live with their birth family. Your social worker will support you in deciding if you feel that you would be able to meet the child's needs and will liaise the child's family finding social worker to find out further information.

If the child's social worker feels that you are a good match and that you are able to meet all of the child's needs, then they will visit you and your family at home to discuss the match further. The social worker will recommend if you should become a temporary foster carer for the child. If agreed by all parties that you are able to meet the child's needs then you will need to confirm this in writing. The child's family finding social worker will then complete an assessment, which you will need to read, agree and sign, which is provided to the fostering decision maker for their recommendation.

If agreed by the fostering decision maker you then become a temporary foster carer for the child. Your social worker and the child's social workers will discuss with you when the child will come to live with you. The child's social worker will continue to visit the child at your home and will keep you updated regarding the plan for the child.

If the Court decides that the child should be adopted, then your adoption social worker in agreement with the child's social worker may recommend that you go to matching panel and if agreed the placement will cease being a fostering placement and it becomes an adoption placement.

Once the child has lived with you for ten or more weeks, your social worker can advise you



Adopter assessment process

A two-stage training and assessment process for prospective adopters has been in place since July 2013:

- Stage 1: The two-month Pre-Assessment Process focuses on initial training and preparation of prospective adopters and is very much adopter-led. Local authorities will carry out prescribed checks and references to determine suitability to adopt a child.
- Stage 2: The Assessment Process should take place over four months, during which the agency carries out intensive training and assessment of the prospective adopter.
- A fast-track process is also in place for those who have adopted before and foster carers wanting to adopt children in their care. These prospective adopters can generally proceed directly to Stage 2.

If you are interested in fostering for adoption, please contact your local authority and make enquiries about their policy and processes, please note that each Local Authority may have slightly different policies and approaches in relation to Fostering for Adoption.

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