

Thinking of fostering?



Think
Fostering
North East

Part of St Cuthbert's Care

Welcome to Fostering North East

We are so pleased you are considering becoming a foster carer with us.

Based in Newcastle upon Tyne, we have had continued success with our fostering placements since the agency began in the 1950s, and we believe this is a result of our ability to match the right family with the right child.

Consideration is given to both the carers' and the child's wishes and feelings from the very beginning, and we ensure the carers are given the level of support required to match the needs and demands of the child.

We offer three main types of fostering: 'long-term' fostering, 'short-term' or 'temporary' fostering and 'short-break' or 'respite' fostering. Details on each type can be found in this booklet.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact our fostering team for more information.



“ Carers are provided with very high levels of support.

This helps to ensure that young people make good progress and enjoy a positive experience of foster care.”

Ofsted Report, 2015

About Us

Fostering North East is focused on providing long-term, short-term, respite and parent & child care to the children and young people of the North East who need our help.

Fostering North East is registered as an independent project of St Cuthbert's Care and shares its ethos and purpose: “To work for the common good by enabling people to develop to their personal potential”. and its vision: “To achieve excellence in all that we do.” We offer ongoing training and continuous support to all our carers, and their birth children, to ensure they are equipped and confident to take on the role of a foster carer. This level of commitment to our carers results in a team of dedicated and committed carers who, in turn, provide the highest level of care and support to the children and young people in their care.

Our Aim

We are dedicated to helping children enjoy their day-to-day life in a safe and secure environment and, most importantly, providing them with a successful, sustainable placement achieved through careful matching with foster carers.

The outcomes identified in the government's “Every Child Matters” policy are at the heart of our work:

- To be healthy
- To be safe
- To enjoy and achieve
- To make a positive contribution
- To achieve economic well-being



Why choose Fostering North East?

Fostering North East enables you to make a difference to children's lives whilst earning an excellent allowance and gaining first-rate training and high-level support.

Training

You will receive basic training in first aid, safeguarding, food hygiene, anti-bullying and non-violent crisis intervention. You also have the option to undertake additional training courses that are more advanced. This all provides carers with the confidence and knowledge required to look after the children in their care.

Your first steps will be to take part in our initial training preparation groups, aimed at giving prospective carers an introduction to the different aspects of fostering.

There are usually three sessions held during weekends or evenings and it is important that you attend them all. If you are part of a couple, both partners must attend.

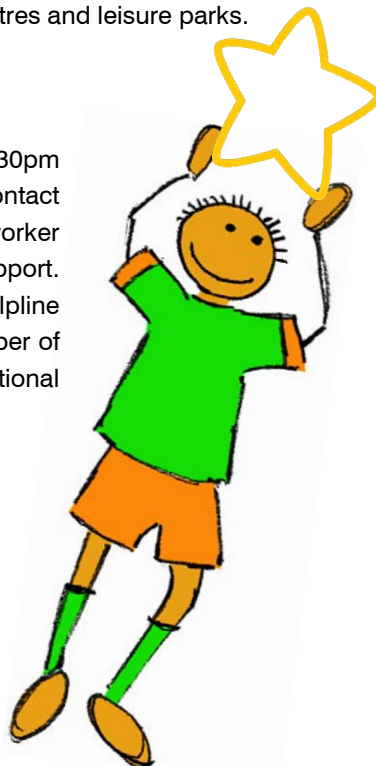
Issues covered by the training group include child development, loss and separation, feelings of birth parents, types of abuse and how these affect children's behaviour, managing difficult behaviour and the impact on yourself and your family. The training may also include contributions by experienced carers.

At the same time as the training sessions and support groups take place, we run a Youngstars Group for the birth and foster children in your care. Youngstars provides in-house arts, crafts and games, as well as day trips to local attractions, activity centres and leisure parks.

Help and support

During the working hours of 9am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday you will be able to contact your allocated support worker or duty worker who will offer you on-going advice and support. We also have a twenty-four hour helpline available, allowing you to speak to a member of the fostering team at any time for additional support.

Once foster carers join Fostering North East, they find they want to stay. We have an excellent rate of retaining foster carers; 36% of our carer families have been with us for more than 10 years, over 55% with us for more than five years and one for 32 years. We believe this is down to the excellent, personal service provided to each individual carer.



“ I have been a foster carer for 15 years and I have enjoyed every minute of it.

That's how good Fostering North East is.”

Current Foster Carer



“ I was totally involved in every aspect of the training process and all of my views and questions were taken into account.”

Current Foster Carer



“ The support provided to foster carers is excellent. Carers comments about support included, ‘the support is second to none, there is always someone to help or give advice’ and that ‘full, 100% support and back up in all aspects of fostering is provided.’

Ofsted Report, 2015

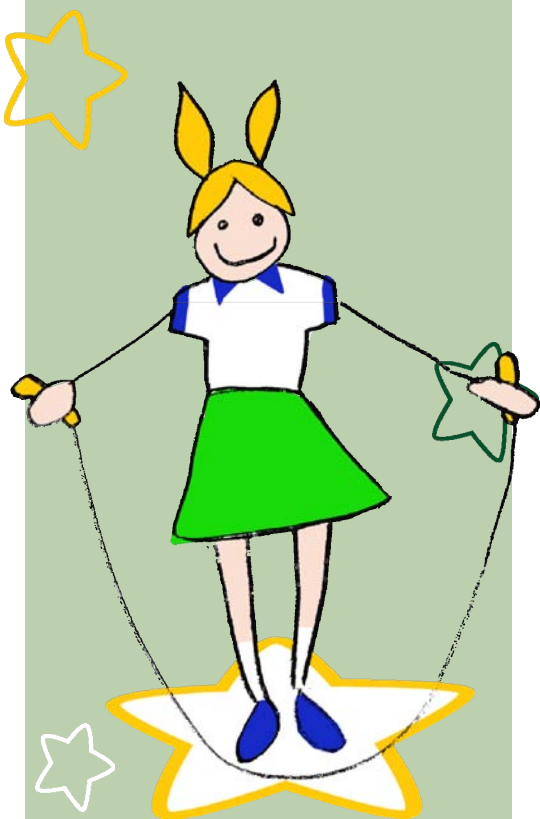
Which type of fostering is best for me?

There are three main types of foster care:

Long-term Care,
Short-term Care
(or temporary care),
and **Respite Care**
(or short break care).

Parent & child
also offered

To determine which one is best for you, have a look through these descriptions.



Long-term care

This is when you take on the commitment of permanently caring for a child or young person until they are ready to move on to independence, usually around the age of 18. The child or young person does not legally become yours, as is the case in adoption, but you are responsible for them on a daily basis and they become part of your family.

Children placed in long-term care are usually over the age of nine years old; children younger than this would normally be placed for adoption. They are likely to have experienced abuse or neglect in some form and may have been in several children's home and/or foster homes. Experiences such as these often mean that the child will have a number of difficulties to be worked through and will need your patience and understanding.

Contact with their birth family is a significant feature of long-term fostering. Even though a child cannot live with their birth family, these relationships remain very important. Agreements are worked out between all parties involved in supporting the child or young person at the beginning of the placement. Long-term fostering allows a child to grow up in a safe environment whilst keeping in touch with their birth family at the same time.

Short-term or temporary care

Short-term fostering is when a child, or children, come to stay with you and your family for a set period of time while plans are made for their long term future.

Children will generally be placed with you because they are unable to remain with their family for one reason or another. These reasons could include a parent going into hospital or be due to evidence of neglect or abuse.

Children in this case are often desperate for placements at very short notice, so you would need to be able to respond quickly.

A short term placement can last a few weeks to a few years. The child will become an important part of your family and you may find you become close to them. This makes the 'moving-on' process quite emotional, but it can also be very rewarding to see the child reunited successfully with their birth family or moving on to a long term placement.

Short break or respite care

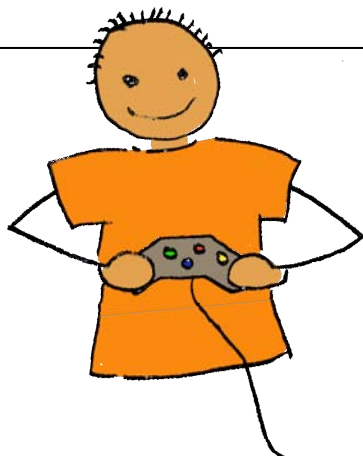
This is when a child comes to stay with your family on a regular basis to give their parents or permanent carers a break. You will be matched to a specific family and will build up a relationship with the child and their family over a period of time.

We would ask that you are able to commit to at least two weekends each month for this service and preferably some extra time in school holidays.

Typically children placed for short break fostering will have special needs of some description. These could be physical disabilities, such as cerebral palsy or Down's Syndrome, learning difficulties or behavioural difficulties, often as a result of abusive or neglectful backgrounds.

The overall benefit of the short-break service is that it enables children with high care or complex needs to remain with their birth family or permanent foster family in the long term, so preventing family breakdown.

Providing short break care can be a very rewarding and satisfying introduction to fostering if you are unsure or unable to make a full time commitment.



“ I get on really well with Joann. She has been invaluable in supporting me ...she often phones to make sure everything is alright and if I need any help with anything.”

Current Foster Carer

“ Fostering can be quite daunting at first, but I’ve loved every minute of it.

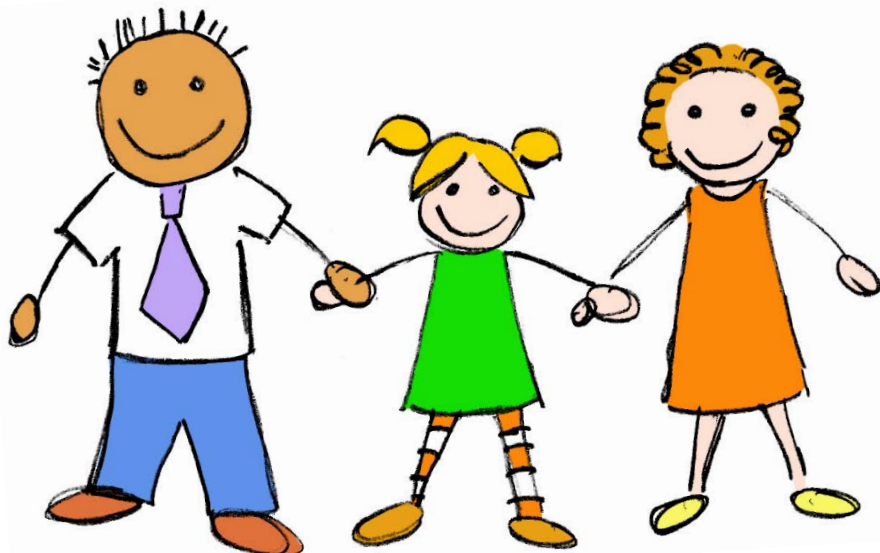
Fostering North East have been with me every step of the way and the support they have provided has been second to none.”

Jean, foster carer for 13 years

“ I have enjoyed the boys being around the house, it’s like having two younger brothers.

We do a lot of activities together like bike riding and taking the dogs out for walks.”

Short-term Foster Carer’s son



How the fostering allowance works

Your fostering allowance is reviewed annually. The following figures are correct as of April 2017.

Short Break / Respite Care

If you are offering short break / respite foster care for a child with special needs, you will be paid, per 24 hour period, at the rate of:

£74 per child

with complex needs

£52.50 per child

with less complex needs

Short-Term and Long-Term Care

If you are offering short-term or long-term foster care for a child, you will be paid, per week, at the rate of:

£518 per child

with complex needs

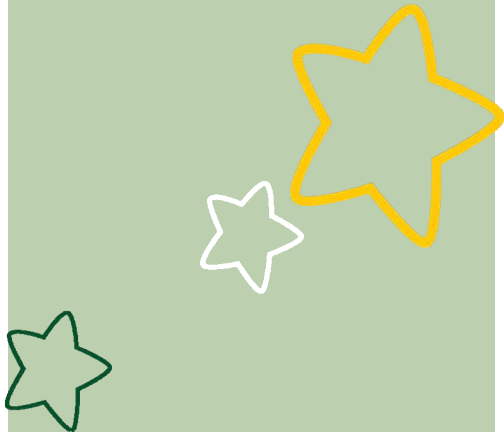
£367.50 per child

with less complex needs

The complexity of a child’s needs is dependent on the outcome of an assessment undertaken by the Local Authority



Are there any criteria I have to meet?



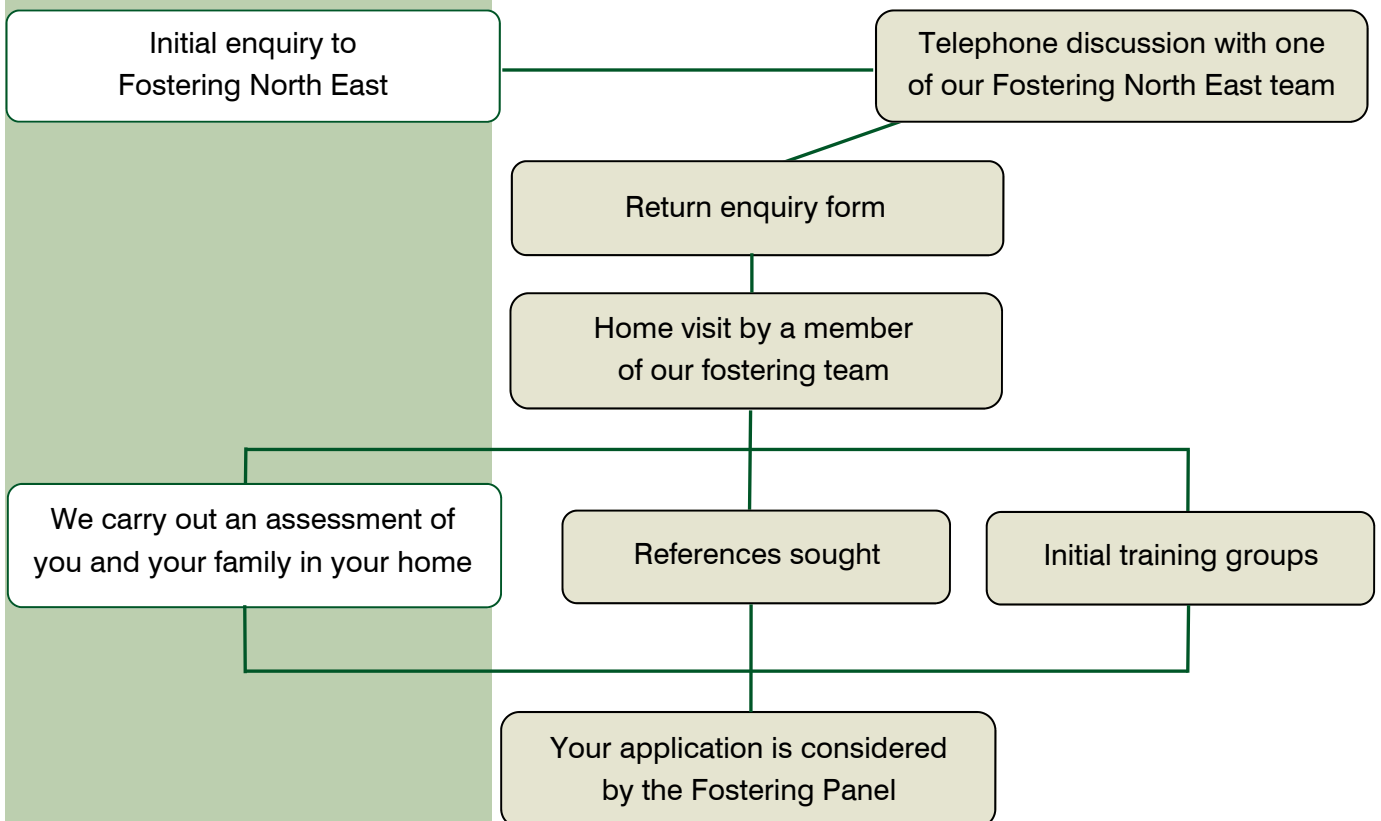
We welcome applications from people who:

- Are single, married or in a relationship
- Are working, full time or part time, retired or unemployed
- Own their house or live in rented accommodation, as long as they have a spare bedroom available
- Are childless, have grown-up children, or have children living at home

Qualities we require from our foster carers:

- You must genuinely like and enjoy being with children
- You have determination and commitment to the role
- You have a sense of humour
- You are comfortable asking for help and support when it's required
- You are able to be flexible and make the necessary changes
- You appreciate that fostering will have an impact on you, your children, if you have any, and your wider family

I'm interested - what happens next?



The whole process, from initial enquiry to final approval, can take from four to eight months, depending on circumstances.

Case Study 1

Rachel, age 11

"I received loads of Christmas presents, but best of all I was given love." These were the comments of 11 year old Rachel who has been with her current long-term carers for over a year. She made this comment following her first Christmas with Alice and Jim, when she was overwhelmed by the love and care shown to her, not only by her carers but also by their family, friends and neighbours.

Rachel had a traumatic early life characterised by domestic violence, alcoholism and abuse. However, since coming to live with her long-term carers her life has been turned around for the better; she is doing very well at school - she would like to be a vet - and is learning that a difference of opinion need not result in black bin liners at the door and another move.

Rachel is learning how to make friends and to join in with a variety of activities including dancing and swimming lessons and Guides. She enjoys helping her carers in their allotment, going on bike rides with them and trips out with them to local places of interest.

Rachel anticipated the day she was to be placed with them as **"the best day of my life apart from my wedding day"** and was so excited to have a **"forever family"**.

Case Study 2

Jason, age 12

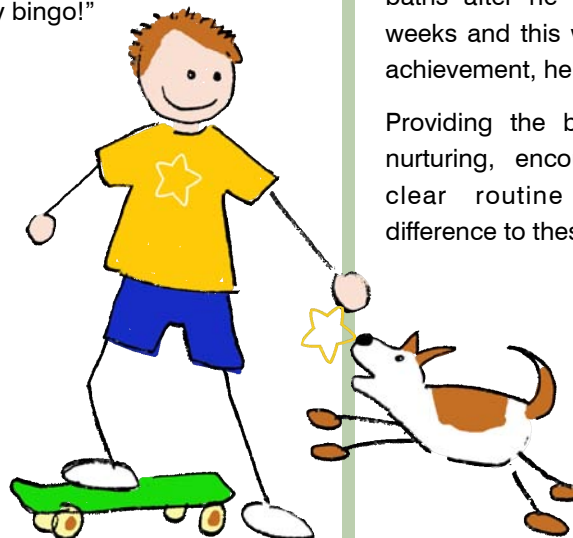
"Jason has just returned from a Dreamflight trip to Florida, which he described as **"brill"**.

He has cerebral palsy and was nominated for this trip by his Consultant for his bravery in dealing with his condition and his positive and cheerful outlook on life. Life certainly changed for Jason the day he moved in with his current long-term foster carers over 4 years ago.

Beth and Mike were apprehensive at first when Jason came to live with them as his history showed a child who could not walk and who was withdrawn and sullen. In his previous placement he had gone to bed at 6pm and could not play out or get involved in any physical activities.

Now Jason is a treasured family member; he attends a weekly youth club and football club with the help of a befriender and enjoys camping on the beach with his foster family. He enjoys going out in the family boat and the carers' attitude is one of encouraging and supporting Jason to do anything and everything he wants.

His current ambition is to stay with his foster family until he is 17 and to play foxy bingo!"



Case Study 3

Sam, age 3 and Jonathon, 4

"Brothers Sam and Jon were placed with foster carers in an emergency situation following years of neglect, missed medical appointments and lack of stimulation.

At 18 months Sam was unable to walk and his legs had no muscle tone due to being kept strapped in his buggy or cot for hours at a time. Jon was terrified of water and refused point blank to go in the bath; his hands would clench and turn white, and he became rigid with fear, when a wash or a bath were mentioned.

On placement the boys looked frightened and withdrawn, with the younger one rocking himself backwards and forwards for comfort. In a surprisingly short time the boys have settled into a clear routine so that they know food will always be available and the carers will play with them and see to their every need.

Gradually Jon has been coaxed into the bath, first of all by carers getting him to wash a dolly and then by playing with water with him; he had his first trip to the swimming baths after he had been there 6 weeks and this was a monumental achievement, he absolutely loved it.

Providing the basic essentials of nurturing, encouragement and a clear routine made such a difference to these children's lives."



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For further information on the full range of services provided by St Cuthbert's Care, please contact Sheila Errington, Director of Care Services at the address above or on:

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Email: sheila.errington@stcuthbertscare.org.uk

www.stcuthbertscare.org.uk

