



Becoming a Foster Carer or Supported Lodgings Provider for Hull Fostering



THANK YOU FOR ENQUIRING ABOUT FOSTERING A CHILD FROM HULL.

Thank you for getting in touch with us.

This booklet has lots of information about fostering and Supported Lodgings, most of which has been suggested as being useful by some of our newer carers.

The information includes topics such as:

- who can foster and why people foster
- the different types of fostering
- financial information
- the fostering assessment and approval process
- what is Supported Lodgings
- Supported Lodgings assessment and approval process
- frequently asked questions

Hull Fostering is part of Hull City Council and we need foster carers to provide care for children and young people when their own families can't look after them.

Our carers can choose to foster with Hull Fostering even if they do not live in Hull but live within a 30 mile radius.

Hull Fostering is the largest fostering service in the local area and are responsible for all children in Hull.

We are so proud of the children and young people of Hull, they are imaginative, inspirational, and wonderful in their own unique ways.

It's our job as adults to make sure our children can remain living in the city they know and love, especially if they are not able to live with their own family.

The children and young people in our care deserve the most nurturing setting possible to enable them to thrive. So, when a child or young person cannot live with their family, it is our responsibility at Hull Fostering to find foster carers and Supported Lodgings providers who live in or within a 30 mile radius of Hull who can provide a safe and supporting home for these children and young people to live.

FOSTER
FOR HULL



What is Fostering

When a child cannot live with their own family sometimes, they need to live with an approved foster carer or family, and that is fostering.

It takes a village to raise a child, at Hull Fostering we strongly believe we are one family and will support and work with our foster carers and Supported Lodgings providers, our children's social worker, partner agencies and schools to provide a safe and secure home for a child or young person.

We only want the very best for our children, and collectively with their say we will make the safest and best plans for their future. This could be working with their families so the child can return home with support or where this is not possible, a permanent option like long-term fostering or adoption may need to be considered.

At the very heart of everything we do, both Hull Fostering and our foster carers aim to provide the safest care possible. It can be a challenging role, but our foster carers tell us it is also hugely rewarding.

Fostering to Suit You and Your Family

We offer six different types of fostering to suit your home, your family dynamics and life commitments.

These include mainstream fostering, respite care, support care, Supported Lodgings, special needs and disability fostering and P.A.S.T.

Each type of fostering is explained in more detail on the next page.

Our Carers

Our carers are amazing, they are a diverse community, from a wide range of different backgrounds, lifestyles, relationship status's and professions. All we ask from you is you have a big heart, willing to expand your skills and knowledge and take the greatest care of our children.

To foster you will need:

- to have a spare bedroom (unless you specifically wish to foster babies up to 18 months old and then they can remain in the same bedroom as the carer)
- must be over 21 years old - there is no upper age limit
- Live within a 30-mile radius of Hull



DIFFERENT TYPES OF FOSTERING TO SUIT YOU

There are several fostering options open to foster carers and from these you can choose which best suits your home, family dynamics and life commitments.

Mainstream Fostering

Some children and young people may need to stay with you for a little while until they can return to their parents or are adopted. Other children need a stable long-term home where you will support them into adulthood. This is called mainstream fostering. You can specify where your skills are best matched, some people prefer to care for babies, toddlers, teenagers or sibling groups.

Looking after a child as a mainstream carer you will be their guardian and Hull Fostering will give you delegated parental responsibility to make certain decisions, like taking them for a haircut, G.P appointment or taking them abroad on holiday.

The child will be a part of your family and their voice needs to be heard in all professional meetings. As their advocate you will be invited to all professional meetings, you will have a say in the child's care plan, and given autonomy in making certain day to day decisions.

Like many parents, a lot of our carers continue to work and undertake hobbies whilst fostering. We encourage you to have a healthy work-life balance and offer a babysitting allowance, day care, respite services and heavily reduced leisure passes if needed.

Hull Fostering are a huge community and come together many times a month to meet up, have fun and support one another. You will never be alone in mainstream fostering and you will be buddied up with another foster carer in your local area as a mentor for the first 12 months of your fostering journey. You will also be invited to join one of our Mockingbird constellations and support groups.

"They say if you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life, being a foster carer is a way of life for me, I couldn't imagine waking up and not seeing a little smile coming from the cot."

My own children are amazing with the babies in our care. Although I am treated like a professional, this isn't a job to me, it's too fulfilling to be a job."

Respite Care

A child might need to stay with respite carers if their main carer is poorly, has a commitment where the child or young person cannot attend or another reason.

Respite carers provide a break for mainstream carers by offering the child or young person short periods of time in their home. Respite care is good if you have little flexibility with work commitments, but you still would like to help.

As a respite carer you will be treated as a professional, you will have the same shared responsibilities as a mainstream carer and you will be another advocate for the child. The only difference between a mainstream carer and respite carer is the period of time you have the child in your care.

"I work in a school, so I use the school holidays as perfect opportunities to offer short breaks to children and their foster carers."

I have some children who come to stay with me over the weekend once a month, and other children who come as and when needed. I love having them here, my house and heart feel full.

Having me available to help out really does make a massive difference to the foster families who need a short break from time-to-time and the children I look after really look forward to coming."

Support Care

Support carers are similar to respite carers in that they provide children (who may or may not be in fostering) with either emergency or pre-arranged care for short periods of time. The difference is, support carers provide support to families who are in need of a bit of extra support.

If you can only commit to short term assistance and like the idea of working closely with a child's family, then this may be an option for you. You will be qualified as a foster carer and trained to the same level.

"Sometimes we all need a little bit of support and guidance. I'm like the Aunty sometimes, sometimes I can support, sometimes I can show them what I think isn't working too well and other times I can help. It's a very varied role, families deserve a chance."

Supported Lodgings

Most young people are not ready to move on to independent living at the age of 16. Our 'Supported Lodgings providers' offer a home and support for these young people aged 16-21 with the view to helping them make that big step towards independent living.

There are lots of young people aged 16+ who, for a variety of reasons, cannot live with their immediate families and yet are not ready to live independent lives. As a Supported Lodgings provider, you and your home will become a stable environment where they can develop their life skills and their confidence to cope with everyday life.

For all sorts of reasons, some young people have missed out on learning vital life skills and need guidance to go on to thrive as adults. We know from experience that for a vulnerable young person the Supported Lodgings scheme is the ideal bridge between being cared for and taking care of themselves.

As a Supported Lodgings provider you may need to show, support and build a young person's confidence in cooking skills, using public transport, help manage

their own health, finances or timekeeping. The arrangement can be for a period until you, the young person and Hull Fostering agree it's time to try independent living.

"I know I wouldn't have been ready to live alone, manage bills and look after myself at 16 years old. The young people who have stayed with me over the years have really needed some nurturing. I get to see them grow into young adults, it's a pleasure to be part of their journey."

Additional Needs or Disability Fostering

As an Additional Needs and Disability Foster Carer you will be able to provide a child with the love, support and home they need to reach their full potential.

We don't expect carers to have all the skills at the beginning, just the motivation to work with us, a big heart and commitment to the children in your care.

Just like mainstream fostering, some children and young people with additional needs or a disability may need to stay with you for a little while until they can return to their parents or are adopted. Other children need a stable long-term home where you will support them into adulthood.

As a specialised foster carer you will never be alone, the child you will be looking after could have one or more physical, learning or emotional disabilities, ranging from a young person with Asperger's, to communication difficulties or being a wheelchair user. We will work closely with you and be by your side offering all necessary guidance and training needed to make you, your family and the child feel content and supported.

We also work in partnership with other services and external agencies to provide a wraparound package of support, training and relief care for all of your household. You will have access to an occupational therapist, specialist learning opportunities such as; Makaton sign language, manual moving and handling courses, support groups and respite care. If required, we can also apply for funding for adaptations to your home.

"I have the most affectionate little boy in my care, he likes lots of cuddles, benefits from routine and is very sociable. Ryan needs supervision all the time as he lacks understanding of dangers around him and uses pictures to communicate when he has something he wants to say. Ryan makes us smile every day and has fitted in with our family wonderfully."

P.A.S.T (Parent and Child)

Parent and Child Assessment placements are unique opportunities allowing a parent and their child to live with you in your home. This is an opportunity for the child and the parent to bond, be shown by you how to safely care and look after their child and provide emotional and practical support to the new parent.

These placements offer the parent a chance to demonstrate their capabilities in caring for their child before a legal decision is made whether the parent and child can continue to live together after the P.A.S.T placement ends.

P.A.S.T placements are often 12 to 14 weeks and is an incredibly rewarding experience for both you and the parent and child.

You will be given training, continuous support and supervision whilst the parent and child are in your home.

"It is a real privilege to accept mothers and babies to stay with us. Allowing an opportunity for the mum or sometimes the dad to bond with their child in a supervised and safe environment can really help professionals get a sense whether they will be able to succeed on their own."

The bond between baby and parent is so important, it is a very difficult task for professionals to decide whether a child should remain in the parents care or removed at birth. Sometimes it is impossible to know what the right decision is until the parent has had a chance to care for the baby. I offer this chance."

Family and Friends (connected persons)

If a child is unable to live with their parents, where possible we will look to find a suitable adult, the child already knows to care for them. These people are called 'connected persons,' and they are usually an extended family member to the child like a grandparent, Aunt, or family friend. When no one is identified or assessed as suitable to care for the child, a mainstream foster carer is needed to look after them.

Connected persons foster carers have their own dedicated team within Hull Fostering, supporting them.

Emergency Fostering

Sometimes we need foster carers available on standby to look after children or a young person in an emergency (up to 72 hours) until a more permanent fostering arrangement is found.

The child's safety is always our number one priority. When a child's home poses an immediate threat to their safety or health, we must quickly find a suitable foster family who can provide an immediate safe and welcoming home.

You might not support a child for a long time as an emergency foster carer, but you'll be making a big contribution at a critical and emotionally challenging time of their lives, and that's where the big satisfaction lies in this type of fostering.

P.A.C.E Bed Fostering

A PACE bed foster carer provides a safe bed and a warm welcoming environment for a child or young person at the request of the police. This could be due to circumstances in the child or young person's home, or due to criminal activity. This is offered under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

As a PACE carer, you will need to provide care until the morning of the next working day. This means it may be for a single night, or a few nights over a weekend or bank holiday.

You will not be asked to provide a PACE bed for a child or young person if they have been assessed as posing a risk to the public.

SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Fostering is a professional career, and we recognise this by offering you the most comprehensive training, even before you are matched with a child or young person.

To prepare you for fostering, we will ask you to attend some induction training.

We call this pre-approval training.

You will be taught by the very best facilitators in Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of a Child, Attachment, Trauma and Therapeutic Approaches, Child Development and Paediatric First Aid to name a few.

We believe by passing on our knowledge and professional experience to you, through training and continuous support you will be able to make an even bigger difference to children in your care.

Once you have become an approved foster carer, our dedicated fostering training officers will continue to offer you innovative and bespoke training and we will even reward you financially for your ongoing development as part of our Fostering Excellence scheme.

All training for foster carers and Supported Lodgings providers has been developed in accordance with the UK National Standards for Foster Carers, the National Minimum Care Standards, the Common Core Skills and Knowledge and the Children's Training, Support and Development Standards.

Hull City Council is dedicated in offering high quality training to meet your needs as foster carers and Supported Lodgings providers and our wide range of courses are also held online, evenings and Saturdays to fit around your family routines.

Support for foster carers and your family

If you decide to foster for Hull Fostering, you will have a dedicated fostering social worker, who will offer you guidance and support throughout your fostering journey.

You will have:

Your own dedicated social worker

- 24-hour support 365 days a year
- have a team covering out of hours support for emergencies
- we will offer you a mentor, who is an experienced foster carer and has been in the same situation as you, to help guide and support you.



- you will be invited to attend any of the six fostering support groups which run monthly and is a place you can meet other foster carers within your local area, who become another friendly and experienced support network
- you will also be offered to join one of our Mockingbird constellations
- attend our exclusive Hull Fostering toddler and baby groups, including our own SEND toddler and baby group
- access to join our exclusive fostering private Facebook group
- can speak to anyone at Hull Fostering at anytime

We also cover your Fostering Network Membership, which gives you access to:

- independent fostering advice
- additional support
- legal and financial advisors
- additional training
- research publications
- practical support helplines

It is important we also support your own children and thank them for sharing you. A specialist support group for the children of foster carers is a great place for your children to share their experiences and enjoy activities together.

Social events for all the family

Hull foster carers and social workers work here because we genuinely want the very best for our children in care. Throughout the year Hull Fostering plan parties, events, ceremonies and trips out for the whole family as well as regular activities. These are organised throughout the year and are great fun.

Leisure passes

You will be given free or heavily discounted access to leisure services across Hull and the East Riding.

Getting a break (respite care)

If you or your foster child or children need a break, there can be respite care available in certain circumstances.

Extra help from other services

Hull Fostering are proud to have fostering support workers, who will provide additional support to your family, such as taking the child in your care out for the afternoon or assist with appointments or school pickups.

At any time, you can access practical or specialised support through us.

This could be extra help from education or medical specialists.

Professional out of hours support

Support is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, all Hull Fostering foster carers can be assured there is specialised help on the end of the telephone, at all times.

Mockingbird

We are very proud of our successful Mockingbird constellations.

Mockingbird is a pioneering programme delivered by The Fostering Network in partnership with Hull Fostering. The programme nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community of six to ten satellite families called a constellation.

These fostering households come together and provide an extended family network to one another.

Children are allowed to stay over at each other houses, lifetime friendships are made and as an extended family you will get so much love and support from one-another.

For more information on the success of Mockingbird, please visit www.HullFostering.co.uk and www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk

TOP 10 PROMISE

At Hull Fostering, we are very much a community, we support one another and all care so much for the children in our care.

As leading professionals and role models, we believe it is important Hull Fostering provide all our carers with a promise of high-quality support, care and progression.

Our Top 10 Promise was created to ensure each and every one of our foster carers feels supported, treated as professionals and part of the team. We will celebrate success together, support and encourage all our carers throughout their fostering journeys.

It is very important Hull Fostering maintain high professional standards, especially regarding treatment, support, and encouragement of our foster carers, having this Top 10 Promise is one of the many ways we promise to keep our children in care and our carers at the heart of all we do.



Top 10

Fostering Promise

FOSTER[®] FOR HULL

Hull Fostering will hold your hand every step of your fostering journey so you can hold theirs.

We are extremely proud of our carers and children.

By caring for our children together, you and your family will be confident in welcoming a child into your home knowing you feel supported, listened to and an integral part of our team.

To make this happen we promise:

1) Training

You will feel confident, skilled, and capable in your role as a foster carer.

We believe by passing on our knowledge and professional experience to you, through dynamic and flexible training you will be able to make an even bigger difference to children in your care. Your skills will be the cornerstone of supporting our children in greatest need to feel loved and important.

2) Allowances

A career in fostering is a professional role and one we recognise through our financial package. You will be paid a competitive rate for each child in your care, an additional weekly skills payment given based on your experience and continuous learning development, £500 annual bonus, mileage, babysitting and setting up costs. You will be given additional allowances for providing experiences for the children in your care to go on holiday, cover Birthday and Christmas presents. Your whole family will receive heavily reduced leisure membership passes, Max card, special discounts and local benefits. We also pay your annual Fostering Network membership.

3) Support

You will be part of a wonderful community of foster carers and our team. By caring for our children together, you will feel supported whatever the time of day. You will have your own dedicated fostering social worker, 24-hour support 365 days a year and another team covering out of hours support for emergencies. We will always be available to help you. You will be invited to attend any of the six fostering support groups held each month and given access to stress, legal and financial support lines specifically for foster carers. New carers will also be partnered with an experienced foster carer mentor for the first 12 months.

4) Two Way Communication

As part of our team, you steer the future direction of Hull Fostering. You are invited to be part of our monthly consultation group chaired by Hull Fostering managers, given access to a private Hull Fostering carers Facebook group and sent monthly newsletters. Based on our community approach, we are continually striving for improvement, development and progress for you, our children and the department. You will have a great relationship with your dedicated Fostering Social Worker and can speak to any of the team or managers when needed.

5) Keeping Things Local

All our carers live within 30 miles of Hull, meaning our children still get to live in the city they know. We know this is very important to our children and by staying local they have more chances of staying in contact with their friends, school and support network. Hull Fostering are based in Hull city centre and means when you need us in person, we are never far away.

6) Professionalism

You are the cornerstone of our children's futures, progress, and development and your voice will be heard when professional decisions need to be made. You know the children in your care, and we support you in making day-to-day decisions. You are an integral part of our team, and we encourage your opinions, recommendations, and professional curiosity. We will encourage you like all our team to continually develop through training opportunities and may ask you to become a mentor for new carers joining our family.

7) Celebrating Success

To show our appreciation and caring for our children together, Hull Fostering organise several fun activities throughout the year for the whole family to enjoy. From visiting the Pantomime, holding summer and Christmas parties, we also thank our carers for continual service to our children with ceremonies, awards, and gifts. Hull Fostering work closely with local businesses, allowing us to put on weekly sporting sessions, after school clubs and activities for your entire household and more opportunities to meet our community of carers in the city.

8) Whole Family Approach

We recognise it takes the whole family to successfully accept other children into your home and lives. We thank your birth children for sharing you by organising specific fun activities and regular talking groups exclusively for your birth children. Their voice is just as important, and any feedback will be given to the consultation members for actioning.

9) Recruitment

We offer six types of fostering to suit you and your family. Depending on your commitments there are a multitude of different types of fostering you can provide to help a child needing care. Hull Fostering are continually trying to recruit new foster carers to ensure we have enough families to meet the needs of the children coming into care. It is important our assessment process is thorough, and training is given to new potential carers prior to approval to ensure they fully understand the role and responsibilities before inviting a child to live with them.

10) Mockingbird Family Model

We support the 'Mockingbird family model'. Mockingbird is a support network like no other. Up to 10 fostering households come together and provide an extended family network to one another. Children are allowed to stay over at each other houses, lifetime friendships are made and as an extended family problems are resolved quickly

FINANCIAL ALLOWANCES

A career in fostering is a professional role and one we recognise through our financial package.

You will be paid a competitive rate for each child in your care, an additional weekly skills payment given based on your experience and continuous learning development, a £500 annual bonus, mileage, babysitting and setting up costs.

You will also be given additional allowances for providing experiences for the children in your care to go on holiday, cover Birthday and Christmas presents. Your whole family will receive heavily reduced leisure membership passes, Max card, special discounts and local benefits.

We also pay your annual Fostering Network membership.

As a foster carer, you'll be rewarded with a generous fostering allowance for every night a child spends in your care, plus other allowances and benefits too.

The main allowance is intended to be used to cover the cost of caring for the child or young person.

Hull Fostering also has additional and incremental payments called "payment for skills" fees; these reflect the skills and training you have evidenced during your time with us, and are extra payments to you as the carer and not part of the allowance for a child in your care.

Hull City Council pays foster carers above the national recommended rate, and this is reviewed every year.

The amount paid depends on the age of the child and is calculated to cover the cost of caring for the child

Fostering excellence payment for skills schemes

The payment for skills structure acknowledges our carers skills, training, abilities and experience.

This scheme is open to short-term carers, long-term carers, and connected person's carers.

Support care carers are entitled to the scheme if they have a child for over 28 days.

Setting-up allowance

All newly approved foster carers will receive a set-up grant which recognises the start-up costs of fostering.

Loyalty payments

Foster carers will receive a yearly loyalty payment of £500 once they have been approved carers for one year and are continuing to foster for Hull Fostering. Payment will come after your annual review and will continue every year for as long as you remain carers with us.



Financial allowances explained

Hull foster carers are paid a weekly allowance to cover the cost of looking after a child in your home.

The amount paid depends on the age of the child placed and is to cover the cost of looking after the child.

For example:

A foster carer caring for two children aged 11 years-old and 5 years-old with level three skills would typically receive an allowance of £2684.00 every four weeks.

The carer would also be awarded a £500 annual loyalty payment and have the relevant mileage and your family leisure passes covered. We will also pay towards babysitting costs each month.

Additional allowances are available for extra costs such as; setting up your home for foster children, extra payments for holidays, birthdays, festivals (for example purchasing presents for the child at Christmas).

Fostering rates

Weekly allowance rates for fostering are dependent on the age of each child in your care -

Age	
0 to four	£174
five to 10	£197
11 - 15	£246
16+	£299

Extra payments are also made to you by Hull Fostering for each child in your care, to cover taking them on holiday and covering gifts and experiences for their birthdays and festival, this can be paid as an extra weekly amount or lump sum –

Age	Holiday	Festival	Birthday
0 to four	£348	£174	£174
five to 10	£394	£197	£197
11 - 15	£492	£246	£246
16+	£598	£299	£299

Payment for skills - additional weekly payments

We will encourage you to continually develop through training opportunities and to recognise your experience, development, and skills, we have three levels you can work towards.

Level	
One	£97.00 a week
Two	£121.00 a week
Three	£169.00 a week

Addition payment for skills per additional child in your care: £59.00 a week

Supported lodgings weekly payments for caring for young people aged 16 plus

16 and above - £256 and £25 young person contribution = £281 a week

Support care

Each time period below is paid at a rate of £12 per block -

8am	to	12noon
12noon	to	4pm
4pm	to	8pm
8pm	to	8am

FOSTERING FRIENDLY

Hull City Council is a Fostering Friendly employer and has been working hard over the last year to encourage local employers to join in pledging support for children in care.



In 2021, 40% of foster carers combined their fostering role with other employment.

Hull Fostering work with local businesses and organisations to become fostering friendly employers by adapting their HR policies to allow additional leave and benefits to employees who also foster.

If you would like Hull Fostering to approach your employer to become fostering friendly, please email; fostering@hullcc.gov.uk

The Fostering Friendly Employer scheme gives local businesses the opportunity to support our work to recruit more foster carers and give Hull's most vulnerable children and young people a loving and caring home.

The benefits of being an accredited Fostering Friendly employer include;

- Showing your organisation has a strong corporate social responsibility
- Partnership working
- Promotes your organisations commitment to a healthy work-life balance
- Builds your businesses brand by telling potential customers you are fully committed to looking after staff and contributing to the local community

- As a foster carer you will receive additional training and skills, which could have a positive impact on your organisation (e.g. First Aid, Medication, Health and Safety, dealing with conflict and many other Hull City Council courses).

I'm extremely proud that we're supporting the valuable and important work of Hull

Fostering and the Fostering Network. Being a Foster Friendly Employer means that we are helping to raise awareness among our staff and students about fostering and the need for more foster carers. We have also committed to providing time off for our staff to support them with the necessary training and commitments.

As an anchor institution in the City of Hull, social justice is of the utmost importance to us and is at the core of our mission and strategy. We know that Hull has a high number of looked after children, and as a major employer in the city we believe we have a responsibility to work with local partners and to support our community in providing a safe and nurturing environment where our young people can thrive.

Sarah Wilson, Chief People Officer - Hull University





PREPARATION AND ASSESSMENT

The Process

Applying to become a foster carer with Hull Fostering is easy.

All you need to do is complete our online form on our website www.HullFostering.co.uk or call 01482 612 800, and we'll get back to you quickly for a friendly informal chat.

- We will ask to meet you, as this helps us get to know you a bit better and gives you a chance to ask us any questions
- Once we've met and you have decided you would like to apply to become a foster carer, a dedicated assessing social worker will begin your fostering assessment
- The fostering assessment is the most critical and detailed phase of the fostering application process and it's centred on what's called the 'Form F'. This is used by all fostering organisations everywhere in the UK to assess and evaluate an applicant's suitability to be a foster carer.

As you can imagine, it's quite a detailed report and takes time to complete.

We will ask you detailed questions and complete the form over a number of home visits (usually between 6 – 8 visits). We will record why you want to foster children and why you'd make a great foster carer.

- We will ask for your permission to apply for a DBS check and references.
- We will ask you to attend our pre-approval training. Pre-approval training will give you the "building blocks" for fostering and allows you the opportunity to meet and speak to other prospective and approved carers.

Once your Form F is complete and you've undertaken your initial foster care training, it's time for the final step to become approved as a foster carer: attending the Fostering Panel.

- The fostering panel is the final step in the process to become a foster carer, and for many, it's the step they're most anxious about. However, it's important to know that we'd never let you get to this stage if we didn't believe you had what it takes.
- Welcoming your first child. Once you are approved, we'll work hard to match you with a child who we believe will suit you best. We know our children and will start making introductions as soon as you are ready to accept your first child.

It is Hull Fostering's aim to complete a full assessment with prospective mainstream carers within 6 months of your initial contact.

If you are a connected person, the timescale is usually within four months but may be different if the court are involved and set timescales.

If you would like to arrange an informal chat to talk through your options, please call Hull Fostering on 01482 612 800 or email fostering@hullcc.gov.uk and we will be happy to talk to you.

SUPPORTED LODGINGS

Hull Fostering is part of Hull City Council and is the largest fostering service in the local area. We are responsible for all children looked after in Hull.

Hull City Council have a legal duty to support young people making the transition from care to adulthood.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 have seven corporate parenting principles -

1. To act in the best interest of young people and promote their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
2. To encourage young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
3. To take into account young people's views, wishes and feelings
4. To help young people to gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and the organisation it works with
5. To have high aspirations for young people and help them to achieve the best outcomes they can
6. For young people to be safe, and to have stability in their home lives, relationships, education, work and financially
7. To prepare young people for adulthood and independent living

Most young people are not ready to move on to independent living at the age of 16. Our Supported Lodgings providers offer a home and support for these young people aged 16-21 with the view to helping them make that big step towards independent living.

There are lots of young people aged 16+ who, for a variety of reasons, cannot live with their immediate families and yet are not ready to live independent lives.

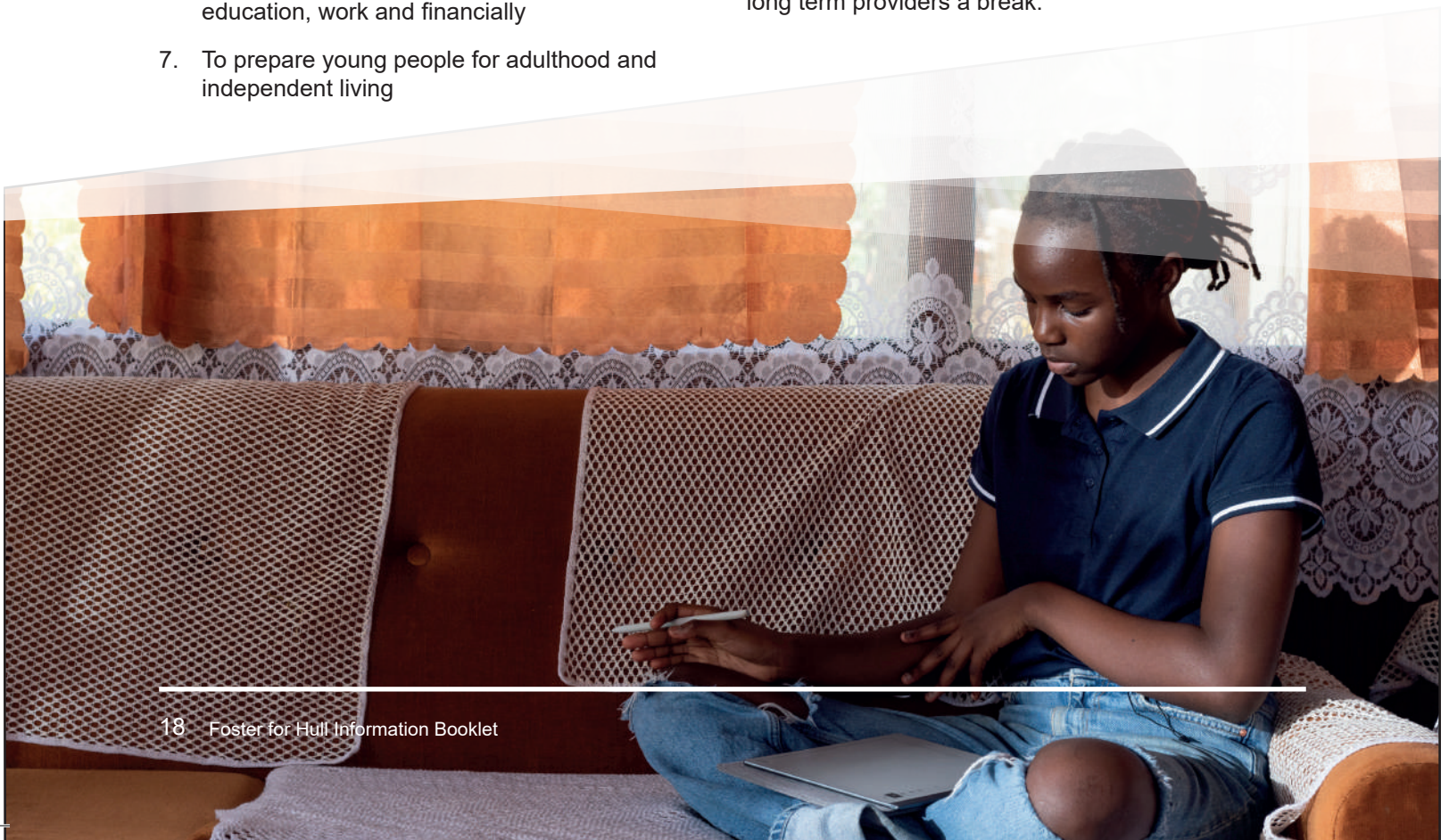
As a Supported Lodgings provider, you and your home will become a stable environment where they can develop their life skills and their confidence to cope with everyday life.

For all sorts of reasons, some young people have missed out on learning vital life skills and need guidance to go on to thrive as adults. We know from experience that for a vulnerable young person the Supported Lodgings scheme is the ideal bridge between being cared for and taking care of themselves.

As a Supported Lodgings provider you may need to show, support and build a young person's confidence in cooking skills, using public transport, help manage their own health, finances or timekeeping.

The arrangement can be for a period until you, the young person and Hull Fostering agree it's time to try independent living.

It can be long term if it is felt that the young person needs continued support, or it can be very brief, for example in periods of respite, which may be for a matter of a few days to give the young person or the long term providers a break.



The greatest need in our area is for accommodation to suit young people aged 16 - 17, and usually up to the age of 24 if the young person is in higher education.

There are many different reasons for young people needing Supported Lodgings. Some may have been living with their own families but find it impossible to continue because of challenging circumstances. Others may be former foster children or have been living in a children's home or other institution. Others have learning disabilities or mental health problems.

In Supported Lodgings young people can learn how to take responsibility for their own lives, whilst living in a safe and caring environment.

Providers of Supported Lodgings are not registered foster carers, but you will be treated as a professional, be given a generous financial allowance, training and support to prepare and help you for this vital role.

"I know I wouldn't have been ready to live alone, manage bills and look after myself at 16 years old. The young people who have stayed with me over the years have really needed some nurturing. I get to see them grow into young adults, it's a pleasure to be part of their journey."

Supported Lodgings Provider

As a Supported Lodgings provider, you will have your own allocated Supported Lodgings Worker and will receive:

- Generous financial allowance paid weekly when a young person is staying with you
- Appropriate training to develop your knowledge and skills to help support young people living with you
- Professional support from people who have lots of experience in dealing with vulnerable young people
- Access to out of hours support through our Emergency Duty Team

Supported Lodgings Assessment Process

Applying to become a Supported Lodgings provider with Hull Fostering is easy.

All you need to do is complete our online form via our website www.HullFostering.co.uk or call 01482 612 800, and we'll get back to you quickly for a friendly informal chat.

- We will ask to meet you, as this helps us get to know you a bit better and gives you a chance to ask us any questions.
- Once we've met and you have decided you would like to apply to become a Supported Lodgings provider, we will leave you some important paperwork to complete.
- With your permission, our Supported Lodgings team will carry out a medical and police check (DBS) on everyone over 18 years old living in your household.
- A member of the Supported Lodgings team will become your assigned assessment worker and will begin your Supported Lodgings assessment.

The assessment is the most critical and detailed phase of the application process and it's centred on your skills and strengths.

As you can imagine, it's quite a detailed report and takes time to complete.

We will ask you detailed questions and complete the form over a number of home visits. We will record why you want to become a Supported Lodgings provider.

It is our aim to complete a full assessment within 16 weeks of the initial contact.

- We will invite you to attend training sessions which will give you a comprehensive grounding in providing safe Supported Lodgings.
- Once the assessment is complete and you've undertaken your training, it's time for the final step to become an approved Supported Lodgings provider -attending the panel.

- The Supported Lodgings panel is the final step in the process. Your assessment will be discussed and a decision will be made whether to approve you as a Supported Lodgings provider. Don't worry, if we take you to the panel we will be very confident that you will be approved!
- Welcoming your first young person. Once you are approved, we'll work hard to match you with a young person who we believe will suit you best.
- You will also be offered the opportunity of having a mentor – an experienced Hull Supported Lodgings provider, to see you through the first months of Supported Lodgings. You will be partnered with a member of our Supported Lodgings team for help and guidance and given access to out of hours support if needed.

Supported Lodgings rates

Being a Supported Lodgings provider is a professional role and one we recognise through our financial package.

You will be given a weekly payment of £281 for supporting a young person.

The £281 a week (£256 and £25 young person contribution) you will receive per young person staying with you, it should be spent on covering all the additional expenses adding an extra person to the house can bring - such as; paying towards food, heating, water and electricity bills and life experiences.

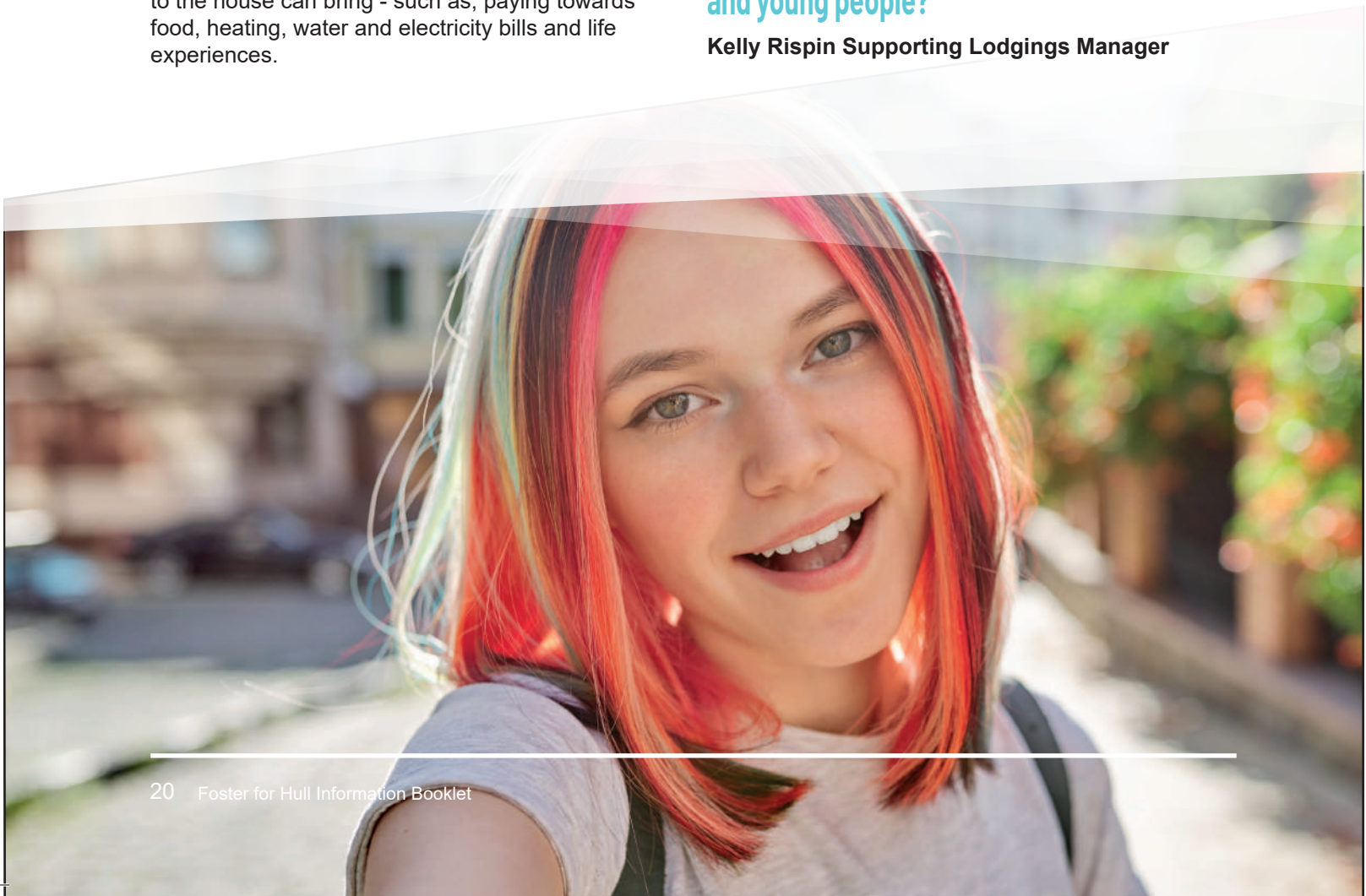
"I know I am not a child anymore, but I don't feel grown up enough to live on my own. Growing up, I never really had routine and life was a bit of a struggle. Since living with Toni and Sam it was funny at first sitting down to family meals and watching the telly together. I'd never done that before. Last week I cooked a Sunday dinner."

Marie, aged 20

"If you have a spare bedroom, with training and support from us you could be the bridge to independent living for young people in Hull."

You will be providing a helping hand to young people at a crossroads in their lives, and often at a make-or-break time. With your help, vulnerable young people can go on to become adults who contribute to their community and fulfil their own potential. Isn't that what we want for all our children and young people?"

Kelly Rispin Supporting Lodgings Manager



FAQ PAGE

Why do children need a foster family?

There are many reasons why families cannot stay living together.

Not having stability or a healthy home environment are some reasons why a child could be moved into care.

Some children are moved into care because of abuse, neglect, or the family dynamics have made it unsafe for a child to continue living with their family, such as domestic abuse or family stresses like police involvement, extreme financial hardship or a major upheaval such as a child seeking asylum in the UK.

We know children's early experiences shape who they are and affect lifelong health and learning.

For a child to develop to their full potential, they need a safe and stable home, secure and nurturing relationships with adults, responsive guardians who will love, care, feed and allow access to medical care and an education.

Foster carers have a big role to play in helping children deal with and overcome these issues and provide the safety and stability they need to thrive and be happy.

What makes Hull Fostering different?

The number of children coming into care continues to rise.

This requires more local people and families in Hull and the surrounding area to consider fostering.

Our children have told us they do not want to leave the area they know, and this is why we request our mainstream carers to live within 30 miles of Hull.

It is important our children feel safe, secure and in control. They didn't ask to be fostered, but for their safety, stability, or health a decision was made in their best interests they should live with a registered foster carer.

Allowing children and young people the chance to remain in the city they know, means they can keep in vital contact with their friends, siblings, parents and remain at the same school.

Hull Fostering is the largest fostering service in the local area and we are responsible for all children in Hull.

There are currently 800 children looked after from Hull who are in the care of Hull City Council, needing foster homes.

Fostering is often described as one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do – giving children and young people, who haven't been given the best start in life, the opportunity to thrive.

The role of a foster carer

As well as providing day-to-day care for children and young people, as a foster carer you will be expected to advocate on behalf of the child, support their educational, health and social wellbeing, manage sometimes challenging behaviour, keep records, attend meetings and work with the wider team, as well as developing your own skills.

It is often important for children and young people in foster care to keep in touch with their birth family – mum, dad, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles or grandparents – through regular meetings. You will play a big part in making these meetings happen.

Like any parent, you will be a role model to the child in your care, providing them with a safe and happy home.

With support from Hull Fostering you will:

- help the child learn to trust adults and form positive attachments
- Make sure they get to school and support their education
- Keep records of the child's progress and achievements
- If appropriate, encourage positive contact with their birth family
- Give them experiences like day trips, holidays and opportunities to enjoy their childhood
- Take part in regular training to constantly develop your skills

What is the difference between fostering and adoption?

The main difference between fostering and adoption is around legal responsibility for the child; when you foster a child, the legal responsibility remains with the birth parents or the local authority.

When you adopt a child, you become the legal guardian.

As a foster carer you could care for a child for as little as a few days or until they reach adulthood.

With adoption, you'll care for the child as you would your own birth children and they'll be part of your family forever.

Foster carers are supervised by a fostering social worker, will be encouraged to continue their learning and development and receive a weekly fostering allowance to cover the cost of caring for a child. As with birth children, no financial support is given to adoptive parents.

What training will I receive to prepare me for fostering?

Mainstream Foster Carer Training

In order to make the important decision whether to become a foster carer, it is necessary we explain what relationship the Local Authority and you will play in a foster child's life.

This includes an understanding of roles and responsibilities according to legislation, policy and procedure.

Before you begin your fostering career, we will ask you to attend 16-hours' worth of training (8 courses) on subjects promoting the safety, welfare and development of children and young people of all ages.

The sessions will also explore family time needs and arrangements for children and will provide an introduction to attachment, trauma and therapeutic approaches.

Our pre-approval training is delivered in 3-hour blocks on many evenings and weekends throughout the year.

Specialist Foster Carer Training

Deciding whether you would like to become a specialist mainstream foster carer, such as an additional needs and disability foster carer you will be invited to attend an extra session called 'An insight into caring for children with additional needs and disabilities'.

The aim of the 2 ½ hour course is for you to reach an understanding on the varying levels of additional needs and disabilities a child may have

and the impact this can have on family life and any complications/rewards this may pose.

We will look at the support network available to you, including outside agencies and talk to current experienced carers on what it's like to care for a child/children with an additional need/disability.

Connected Carer Training

Connected Care is aimed at grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, close family friends or even neighbours. Anyone who has a positive and pre-existing relationship with the child or young person can become a Connected Carer.

Often being asked to become a connected carer will have been unexpected or unplanned.

In order to make the important decision whether to become a connected foster carer, it is necessary we explain what relationship the Local Authority and you will play in the child's life.

This includes an understanding of roles and responsibilities according to legislation, policy and procedure.

We will invite you to attend training on subjects promoting the role of the Local Authority and Carer, Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child.

The sessions will also explore family time needs and arrangements for children and will provide an introduction to attachment, trauma and therapeutic approaches.

Our pre-approval training is delivered in 3 hour blocks on many evenings and weekends throughout the year.

Supported Lodgings Training

As a Supported Lodgings provider, you and your home will become a stable environment where a young person can develop their life skills and their confidence to cope with everyday life.

As a Supported Lodgings provider, you may need to show, support and build a young person's confidence, help manage their own health, finances or timekeeping until it is agreed the young person should try independent living.

In order to make the important decision whether to become a Supported Lodgings provider, it is necessary we explain what relationship the Local Authority and you will play in the young persons life.

This includes an understanding of roles and responsibilities according to legislation, policy and procedure.

Before you can begin offering Supported Lodgings, we will invite you to attend a number of training sessions on subjects promoting the safety, welfare and development of children and young people of all ages.

The sessions will provide an introduction to attachment, trauma and therapeutic approaches, safeguarding, combined first aid at work and paediatric first aid, PACE – Healing children through therapeutic parenting and substance misuse and alcohol awareness.

Our pre-approval training is delivered on many evenings and weekends throughout the year.

Skills and Experience

Children and young people need foster carers from all backgrounds and experiences.

Our foster carers are a diverse community, from a wide range of different backgrounds, lifestyles, relationship status's and professions. All we ask from you is you have a big heart, willing to expand your skills and knowledge and take the greatest care of our children.

Who can apply to become a foster carer?

Almost anybody can apply to become a foster carer, as long as you meet the following basic criteria:

To foster you will need:

- to have a spare bedroom (unless you specifically wish to foster babies up to 18 months old and then they can remain in the same bedroom as the carer)
- must be over 21 years old - there is no upper age limit
- live within a 30-mile radius of Hull

Our matching process is very thorough, and a child will only stay with you if you are sure you can meet the needs of all the children in your home at that time, regardless of their ages.

Do I need specific qualifications to foster?

You do not need any qualifications to foster, all we ask from you is you have a big heart, willing to expand your skills and knowledge and take the greatest care of our children.

It is very important our foster carers can advocate for fostered children and support them with their education. A reasonable level of reading, writing and spoken English is needed to do this.

As part of your assessment and continuing development, you will be required to put together a portfolio. You will be expected to be able to record effectively and report on the child's progress.

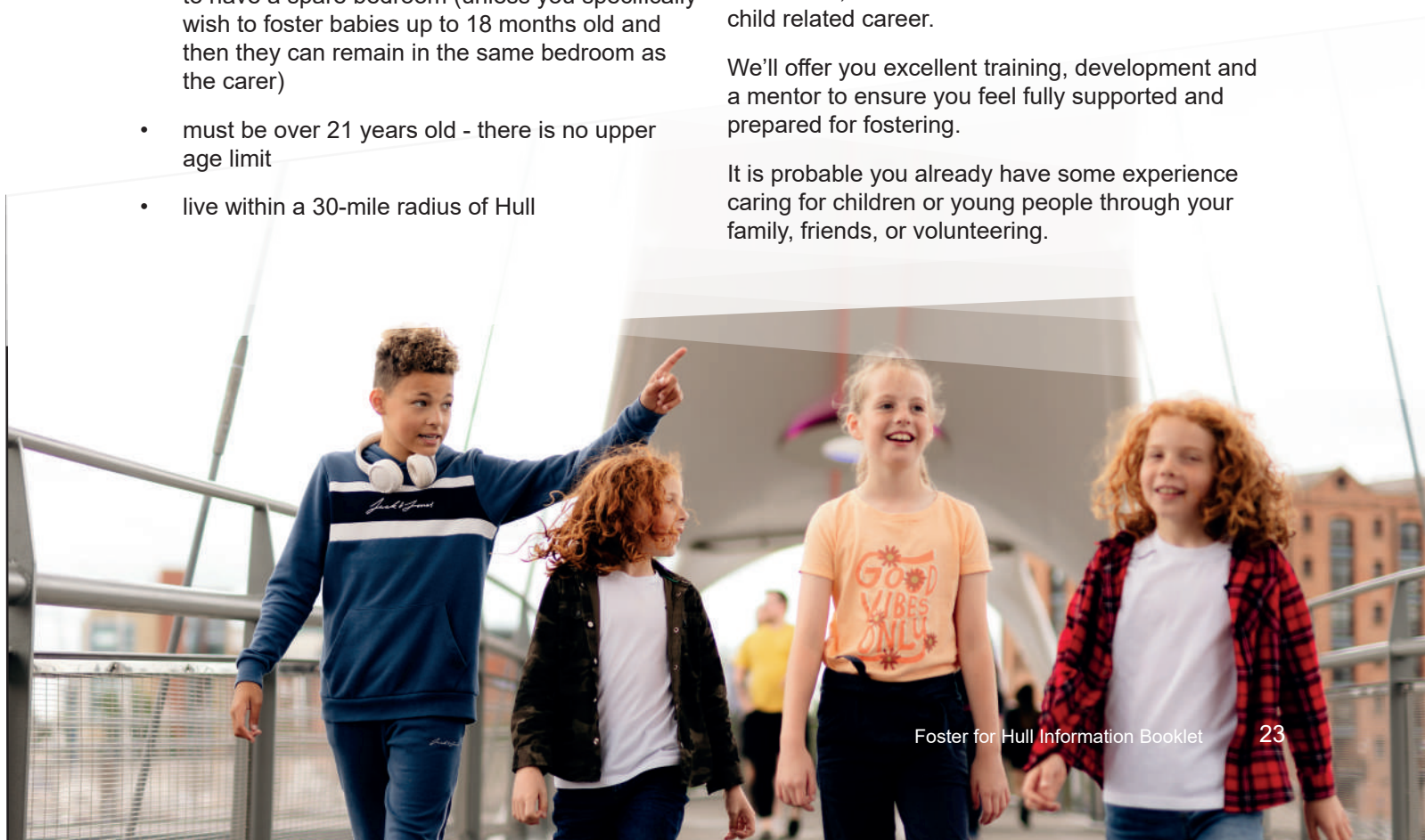
If English is not your first language or you feel you need help in improving your skills, your local college will be able to help locate and enrol you on (often free) courses such as ESOL (English as a Second Language).

I have never worked with children, can I still foster?

Absolutely! We are proud of the diversity, experiences and vast mix of professions our carers come from, and not all of our carers came from a child related career.

We'll offer you excellent training, development and a mentor to ensure you feel fully supported and prepared for fostering.

It is probable you already have some experience caring for children or young people through your family, friends, or volunteering.



I am unemployed, can I foster?

Yes, at Hull Fostering we are proud of the diverse and varied life experiences our carers have. There is an expectation our foster carers will have enough life experience to enable them to meet the needs of children placed in their care.

We accept applications from people who are unemployed. As long as you are willing to expand your skills and knowledge and take the greatest care of our children, we would love to have you part of our team.

Who are most in need of foster families?

We never want to see siblings separated, but sometimes our carers simply do not have the space to take in more than one child.

Sadly, this means siblings are sometimes split up from one another or we have had to ask another fostering agency to find homes for the children. This could potentially mean splitting brothers and sisters up and they could be placed separately anywhere in the country.

Hull Fostering are most in need of foster carers who are willing to accept sibling groups and children with complex needs so they can stay together, feel safe and stay local to what they know.

We will welcome all types of foster carers, however Hull Fostering are particularly keen to also recruit more providers of Supported Lodgings who can love and support older children and young people 16+ (Supported Lodgings), children and young people with complex needs (emotional, behavioural and special needs), unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and other children and young people from diverse ethnic and cultural groups. We equally need PAST (parent and children placed together) carers and families able to look after brother and sister groups.

Do I get a choice who I foster?

All of our foster carers are approved to care for children from birth to 18 years old, or from 5 years old to 18 years old.

A foster carer will be given a set limit of children that they may foster at any one time, which will be set out in their terms of approval.

This set number may only be exceeded if the children are all siblings of each other.

Health, Lifestyle and Relationships

There is no official upper age limit on foster care and many older people make excellent carers, providing they are able to look after a child or young person.

Our carers varied life experiences, relationship status's, sexual orientation and beliefs bring a wealth of understanding and empathy to many young people. We welcome applications from same sex couples, single foster carers, couples who do not live together and/or have a medical condition.

If you are disabled or have a medical condition, our medical advisor, may with your consent contact your G.P or specialist to gain their views on your application to foster. The focus of the assessment is to determine whether a child's needs can be met within your household.

Past mental illness will not prevent you from becoming a foster carer. What matters is how you are coping today and what strategies you have in place should your mental health deteriorate. As part of your assessment, we obtain a medical report which will be used to guide us in deciding whether fostering is appropriate in your situation.

Do I need my own home to foster?

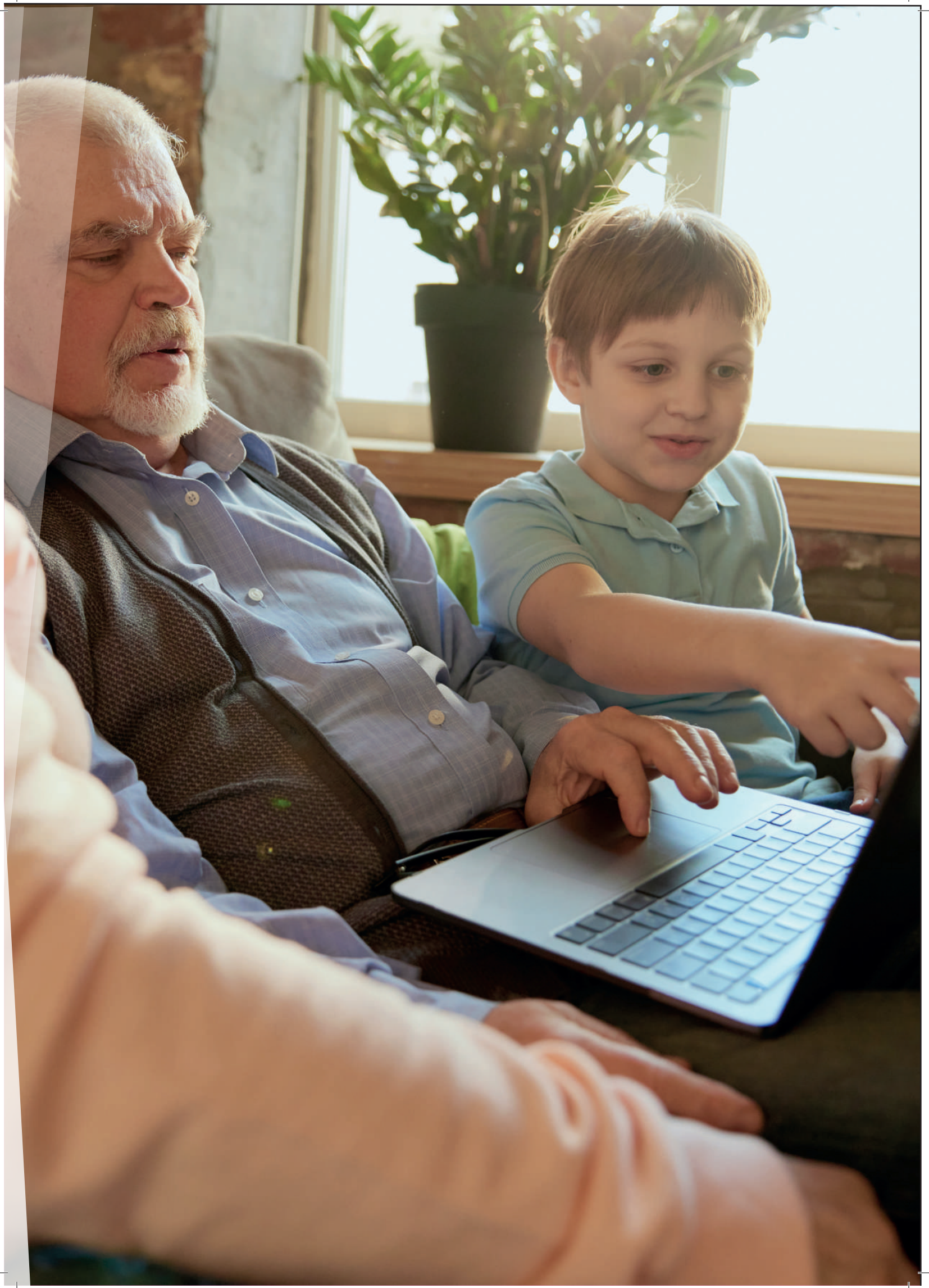
No, you do not need to own a home to foster. If you rent either via a private landlord or Local Authority we will contact them early in the assessment to ensure they are happy with their property being used for fostering. It is advisable you talk to your landlord about your wishes before we start the assessment process.

You can live in a house, bungalow or flat, all we ask is that there is enough room for a child to sleep, play and do their homework. We would ask that the child has access to a safe outdoor space.

I don't have a spare bedroom - can I foster

Hull Fostering requires that each fostered child has the privacy and space they deserve by having their own bedroom.

The exception to this is if you are intending to only care for babies. Babies can share a foster carers bedroom up until 18 months of age.



Do I need home or car insurance?

Yes, you will need to find suitable buildings and contents insurance before a child moves in with you. If your property is privately rented, please discuss buildings insurance with your landlord.

If you have a car you need to ensure you are comprehensively covered.

I have a pond; does it need filling in?

For health and safety reasons all ponds will either need to be covered up with a pond cover that meets safety standards, or filled in. During the assessment process your assessing social worker will complete a Home Safety Check and you will be asked to complete any alterations to your home that are deemed a hazard to children.

Do I need to drive to become a foster carer?

We have a number of foster carers who do not drive. Hull has a good network of public transport, making travel accessible for everyone. When we match a child to your family, we will take transport into consideration.

To maintain some level of stability for a child in care, where possible we will try and keep the child in their current school. Sometimes children move schools to be nearer to where you live, but this does not usually happen straight away and would only happen if it was in the child's best interests.

Where possible we ask foster carers to transport children to school and to their family time sessions. If you do not have access to a car, do not drive or are unavailable for other reasons, you can request to use the councils taxi service.

I have children, can I still foster?

Yes. Many of our fostering families speak of the positive impact fostering has had on their family. Fostering is a family decision; we would recommend speaking to your own children first to check they are onboard and supportive of your decision to foster before applying.

During the assessment we will talk to all your family members to ensure fostering is a good option for you all. Your children can also attend part of the training process.

Some carers find that fostering children who are of a similar developmental age as their own children can fit nicely into their home dynamic.

Yet some carers prefer to care for teenagers when their own children are younger. This may fit as the carer can spend more time with their own children during the day and spend quality time with their teenage foster child in the evenings when their younger children are in bed.

Can I continue to work, if I foster?

40% of foster carers combine their fostering role with other employment.

Hull Fostering work with local businesses and organisations to become fostering friendly employers by adapting their HR policies to allow additional leave and benefits to employees who also foster.

If you would like Hull Fostering to approach your employer to become fostering friendly, please email;

fostering@hullcc.gov.uk

Can I foster if I have pets?

Having pets does not prevent you from fostering; in fact, they can be an asset to a foster family.

However, every animal is different, and your pets will be assessed as part of the process. You also need to think about how you would feel and react if a child reacted negatively towards your pet.

We will not be able to continue with an application if you own a pet that is on the "banned dogs list".

To check if your dog is a banned dog, please follow this link: <https://www.gov.uk/control-dog-public/banned-dogs>

Can I smoke as a foster carer?

At Hull Fostering we do not accept applications from smokers or vapers (E-cigarettes) where their intention is to foster children age 0-5 years.

Fostering applicants for children up to the age of 5 years must be non-smokers. This also applies to other adults in the house.

The risk of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SIDS) increases x5 for babies and young children up to the age of 5 years old when a child is exposed to smoke.

Fostering applicants for children and young people of all ages with a disability, specifically related to a respiratory problem such as asthma and all those with heart disease or other medical conditions deemed relevant by the medical advisor, must be non-smokers.

Fostering applicants who have successfully given up smoking will not be approved to foster children up to the age of 5 years until they have given up smoking successfully for a minimum period of 12 months. This is because relapse rates in the first three to six months are high; after six months the risk of relapse is less and after 12 months most people will be permanent non-smokers.

Electronic Cigarettes / Vaping: It is the view of the Agency Medical Advisors and the Fostering Service that these devices will be classed in the same manner as conventional cigarettes, (this includes zero-nicotine devices).

Although we do approve smokers and vapers, we strongly encourage all our carers to quit smoking. You will not be allowed to smoke or vape inside the family home.

If I have a criminal conviction, does this mean I won't be able to foster?

It is not unusual for applicants to have had some convictions or cautions in their past.

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (often referred to as police checks) are made when people apply to become foster carers.

Applicants with an offence against a child or any violent crime are unlikely to be selected. But having a criminal record won't necessarily disqualify someone from becoming a foster carer.

Should you have a caution or criminal conviction it is important that you are open and upfront about it with us. The earlier you inform us of what we will find on your DBS, the earlier we can make that decision about whether it is appropriate to progress your assessment.

Whether you meet the required fostering criteria depends on the type and circumstance of the offence and how long ago it was committed.



THE FOSTERING PROCESS

The Process

The government states that assessments should take no longer than eight months.

Hull Fostering make every effort to process our assessments in six months.

What happens in the assessment process?

Applying to become a foster carer with Hull Fostering is easy.

All you need to do is complete our online form on our website www.HullFostering.co.uk or call 01482 612 800, and we'll get back to you quickly for a friendly informal chat.

- We will ask to meet you, as this helps us get to know you a bit better and gives you a chance to ask us any questions.
- Once we've met and you have decided you would like to apply to become a foster carer, a dedicated assessing social worker will begin your fostering assessment
- The fostering assessment is the most critical and detailed phase of the fostering application process and it's centred on what's called the 'Form F'. This is used by all fostering organisations everywhere in the UK to assess and evaluate an applicant's suitability to be a foster carer.

As you can imagine, it's quite a detailed report and takes time to complete.

We will ask you detailed questions and complete the form over a number of home visits (usually between 6 – 8 visits). We will record why you want to foster children and why you'd make a great foster carer.

- We will ask for your permission to apply for a DBS check and references.
- We will invite you to attend our pre-approval training. Pre-approval training will give you the "building blocks" for fostering and allows you the opportunity to meet and speak to other prospective and approved carers.

Once your Form F is complete and you've undertaken your initial foster care training, it's time for the final step to become approved as a foster carer: attending the Fostering Panel.

- The fostering panel is the final step in the process to become a foster carer, and for many, it's the step they're most anxious about. However, it's important to know that we'd never let you get to this stage if we didn't believe you had what it takes.
- Welcoming your first child. Once you are approved, we'll work hard to match you with a child who we believe will suit you best. We know our children and will start making introductions as soon as you are ready to accept your first child.

It is Hull Fostering's aim to complete a full assessment with prospective mainstream carers within 6 months of your initial contact.

If you are a connected person, the timescale is usually within four months but may be different if the court are involved and set timescales.

What information do we gather through the assessment process?

Whilst your assessment is being carried out, we will start the background checks, including an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) and seek personal and professional references.

These are referred to as 'stage 1' checks.

Once we have received these checks, we are ready to move to 'stage 2' of the assessment.

Using our assessment form, your assessing social worker will visit you to gather information on the following areas:

- Your motivation to foster
- Your parenting skills, attitude and personality, including any experience of caring for children
- Your ability to work in partnership with Hull Fostering
- Your ability to work as part of a professional team
- Your family lifestyle and finances
- Your health and background

Do my ex-partners need to be contacted for a reference?

If you have been married previously or have had a significant relationship with another person where you have jointly cared for children, we will need to contact them to gather or confirm information. It is our duty to produce thorough assessments, and this includes verifying information with third parties.

We understand that for many people this is a difficult part of the assessment process, but it is necessary to safeguard children.

We will not however, contact ex-partners if there is sufficient reason to believe that you or any of your family will be at risk by doing so.

What happens if my assessment is unsuccessful?

If our decision to withdraw your application from the assessment process comes as a result of stage 1 information (references, DBS checks, or medical), we will explain how we have reached our decision and confirm this in writing.

If you are unhappy with the way your assessment has been handled you have the right to complain via our internal complaints procedure. The complaints process will address whether your assessment has been handled in a reasonable way rather than question your suitability to foster.

If our decision to withdraw your application from the assessment process comes as a result of stage 2 information (discussions, background, motivation to foster, ability to foster, commitment etc) then your assessment social worker will complete a report for panel. Panel will then make their recommendation to our Agency Decision Maker.

If panel agree with the outcome of the social workers assessment and you are still unhappy with this decision, you will have the right to seek a review by the Independent Review Mechanism.

After approval as a foster carer

All foster carers are allocated a qualified social worker as their key contact with Hull Fostering.

The fostering social worker has frequent contact with the carers and carries out supervision looking at supporting them in their practice and offering advice, they will also support and discuss potential training needs through the Fostering Excellence Scheme.

All carers are enrolled on induction training which can take up to 18 months to complete. This training is evidenced through a portfolio which has been designed to reflect exactly the standards set for foster carers in by the Training Support and Development Standards (TSDS). Carers are encouraged to participate in identifying their support and development needs, helping to shape the fostering service's training and development programmes.

Fostering Reviews

All foster carer households are reviewed on an annual basis.

This will include obtaining information from the children's social workers about the carers practice over the past year, information from any children living in the household and information from the foster carers regarding the past years fostering.

The review will also consider the training and development needs of the foster carers and their family.

An Independent Fostering Reviewing Officer (IFRO) chairs the review.

Fostering Finance, Allowances, Tax and Benefits

At Hull Fostering we want all our foster children to receive care that entitles them to the same privileges as their peers.

That is why we currently set our allowance above the government recommended amount.

The allowance is not a wage; it is an allowance that our foster carers use to fund the day-to-day costs that come with caring for a child or young person.

Applicants need to be aware that our foster carers only receive this allowance when a child is staying with them.

Our current fostering allowance rates for 2023/24 are as follows:

Fostering rates

Weekly allowance rates for fostering are dependent on the age of each child in your care -

Age

0 to four	£174
five to 10	£197
11 - 15	£246
16+	£299

Extra payments are also made to you by Hull Fostering for each child in your care, to cover taking them on holiday and covering gifts and experiences for their birthdays and festival, this can be paid as an extra weekly amount or lump sum –

Age	Holiday	Festival	Birthday
0 to four	£348	£174	£174
five to 10	£394	£197	£197
11 - 15	£492	£246	£246
16+	£598	£299	£299

Payment for skills - additional weekly payments

We will encourage you to continually develop through training opportunities and to recognise your experience, development, and skills, we have three levels you can work towards. You will be paid weekly for the skills level you currently are

Level

One	£97.00 a week
Two	£121.00 a week
Three	£169.00 a week

For every additional child in your care, we will add an extra £59 per week to your payment for skills total.

Supported Lodgings weekly payments for supporting a young people aged 16 plus

16 and above - £256 and £25 young person contribution = £281 a week

Support care

Each time period below is paid at a rate of £12 per block -

8am	to	12noon
12noon	to	4pm
4pm	to	8pm
8pm	to	8am

Our foster carers will receive a yearly loyalty payment of £500 once they have been approved carers for one year and are continuing to foster for Hull Fostering.

Payment will come after your annual review and will continue every year for as long as you remain carers with us.

Will I be taxed on the foster carers' allowance?

In April 2003, the Government introduced an income tax exemption for foster carers with an income below a set level.

Foster carers who have multiple children living with them and who also work may be liable to pay some tax if their income is above the set level.

For the purposes of calculating tax, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) treat foster carers as self-employed.

HMRC produce helpful guidance for Foster Carers which you can request direct from HMRC (ask for guidance IR 236).

Will I have to pay National Insurance?

All foster carers must register as self-employed, so must register to pay National Insurance contributions.

Universal Credit

Fostering counts as self-employment, so you may be entitled to Working Tax Credit (and also Child Tax Credit if you have children of your own).

You need to get advice about Tax Credits, which takes into consideration your own individual circumstances.

Eligibility to benefits is assessed on an individual basis by the relevant central or local government department. The government department responsible for benefit entitlement is called the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Any query about fostering allowances and benefit eligibility needs to be assessed by the DWP.

You can receive more information on this by calling 0800 882 200 or visit www.dwp.gov.uk

Am I liable for bedroom tax as a foster carer?

You will have to pay bedroom tax on any spare room, even if it is used for fostering purposes. As a foster carer you are however exempt from paying bedroom tax for one of your spare rooms. This means in

practice that if you live in a three bedroom property that has two spare rooms, you will be paying tax for one of those rooms.

It is also possible to apply for a discretionary housing fund, you can obtain more details on this from your local housing office.

FOSTER. FOR HULL

Becoming a Foster Carer or Supported Lodgings Provider for Hull Fostering



We hope you have found this brochure helpful and found answers to some of your questions regarding becoming a foster carer or Supported Lodgings provider for Hull Fostering.

If you would like to speak with one of our friendly team about joining our family of foster carers, please call 01482 612 800 or email fostering@hullcc.gov.uk and we will be in touch.



Hull
City Council

**FOSTER.
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