

# You can do it ... foster a child

## Support and training

North Somerset values the work our foster carers undertake, and in return provides quality support and training to help to ensure successful outcomes for children and a rewarding experience for carers.

These are some of the ways we support and work in partnership with foster carers.

- Weekly allowances to cover the costs of caring for the children.
- The child has their own social worker who visits regularly, co-ordinates and works with all parties and is responsible for following the plan for the child.
- Each foster carer has a link social worker who also visits regularly to provide support and advice and supervision for the foster family.
- Provision of any necessary equipment such as stairgates, bedding etc.
- A consultant service which provides access to specialist support services for the child and carers.
- 24-hour telephone support service.
- Local support groups and social events.
- Access to a confidential counselling service for the foster family.
- A full and varied programme of training to enable carers to extend their knowledge and skills.
- Opportunities to undertake NVQ level 3 Caring for children and young people.
- Consultation on the fostering service and proposed new developments.

# The skills to foster

## Preparation training course

Eight sessions are held weekly (evening for 2.5 hours) covering the following topics:

1. What do foster carers do?
2. Who are the children and young people?
3. Working together
4. The health of children and young people
5. The health and education of children and young people
6. Safer caring
7. Understanding behaviour
8. Moving on

Where you are in a relationship both partners are expected to attend this course.

# Fostering allowances and skill based payments

In addition to the weekly fostering allowances that are paid to reflect the cost of a child's food, clothing, pocket money etc., North Somerset Council has introduced skill-based payments for carers. The 'Payment for Skills' scheme does not apply to specialist schemes or to carers who are looking after children who are relatives or friends.

- The three levels of the 'Payments for Skills' scheme reflect the considerable skills that carers develop, and creates a foster carer career structure that allows carers to progress through different skill levels, receiving a higher rate of payment upon achieving each level.
- Most newly approved carers will start at **level one**, and can remain at that level if they do not wish to progress up through the structure.
- Once a carer gains more experience and training and can demonstrate the appropriate skills, progression can be made through to levels two and three.
- **Level two** carers will have undertaken at least one year of fostering, and the fostering panel will have deemed that suitable skills have been demonstrated and specific additional training has been undertaken to care for more challenging placements.
- **Level three** carers would be able to demonstrate the skills and ability to meet the most complex needs of looked after children, and would also be expected to achieve NVQ Level 3 Caring for children and young people within three years. Level three carers are also expected to contribute to the development of the service or other carers.

# Foundation training

All carers are expected to complete foundation training within their first year or when training is running, whichever is the sooner. The five components of this are:

- first aid
- child protection
- dealing with challenging behaviour
- valuing diversity
- hepatitis.

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# Level one

These carers would include newly approved carers and all carers who, through choice, do not wish to progress up the structure. They will have completed pre-approval training, been assessed and approved by the Fostering Panel and then be in a position to complete foundation training.

## Carers would receive:

**The age related boarding out allowance and payment of a skill based fee of £60 per week per child placed.**

Level one carers would be expected to be able to demonstrate skills in the following four areas:

- caring for children
- providing a safe and caring environment
- working as part of a team
- developing skills through training and experience.

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- caring for children
- providing a safe and caring environment
- working as part of a team
- developing skills through training and experience.

# Level two

All level two carers are expected to build upon their pre-approval and foundation training and to complete intermediate training within two years.

## Carers would receive:

The age related boarding out allowance and payment of a skill-based fee of £80 per week per child placed.

## Intermediate training

- Sex and relationships
- Drugs and alcohol
- Attachment training
- Child abuse
- Challenging behaviour
- Loss and bereavement
- HIV / AIDS

# Level three

Level three carers will normally have progressed through the foster carer career structure, having achieved level two status and demonstrated the appropriate skills, including a commitment to undertake training and personal development.

- It may be possible for carers to enter level three with a professional qualification. However this needs to be relevant and age-related.

## Carers would receive:

**The age related boarding out allowance and payment of a skill-based fee of £124.72 per week per child placed.**

Carers would receive a retainer of £62.36 per placement for a maximum of six weeks.

- Level three carers are expected to achieve NVQ Level 3 Caring for children and young people, within three years.