

Your parents are thinking about fostering?

Information for adult children of prospective foster carers

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So your parents are thinking about fostering, what will this mean to you?

We know how important it is to let you know what fostering is all about and how it may affect you.

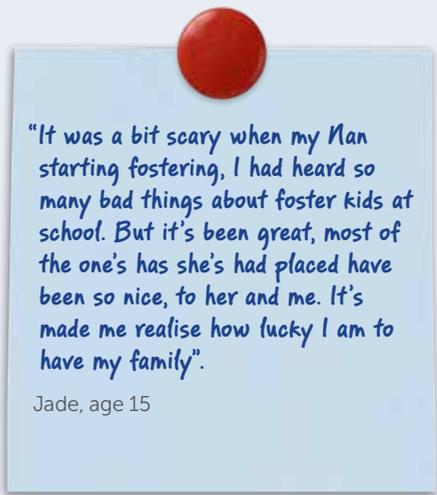
What is fostering?

Fostering is a role that involves the **whole family**, children living at home, adult children who have left home, extended family, aunts, uncles, family friends and neighbours. Fostering offers children and young people a safe, caring family home while they are unable to live at home. Children come into care for a variety of different reasons but unfortunately, the most common reason is abuse and neglect.

If a relative or family friend cannot be sought, the best alternative to living at home is foster care. This will be while social workers and other professionals work with the family to help try and make things safe for the child to return home. If it is in the child's best interests, social workers will always work towards this.

How will I be involved?

As an adult child of a prospective foster carer, you will be interviewed and asked for your views on your parent's application to foster. Your views will be considered carefully and the service will help answer any queries you may have. Your fostering service may also invite you to attend the pre-approval training to help inform you more about the fostering role.



"It was a bit scary when my Nan starting fostering, I had heard so many bad things about foster kids at school. But it's been great, most of the one's has she's had placed have been so nice, to her and me. It's made me realise how lucky I am to have my family".

Jade, age 15

Some of the most common questions adult children ask at this time are detailed below.

I'm concerned about my own children.

As part of the assessment process, if applicants children have grown up and left we will ask about grandchildren, nieces, nephews and look at their ages, what their views are, how often applicants babysit and any other childcare arrangements. All this information will be carefully considered when children are placed. We also ask applicants to consider the future, if they do not have any grandchildren at present, what are their plans to combine fostering and future grandchildren? We would not want fostering to be too unsettling to normal family life, but we do need to be sure that foster carers can make the adjustments needed for our children and that the whole family embraces children placed too.

What about the impact it might have?

Children are placed in care through no fault of their own. It is circumstances at home having reached a point that it is no longer safe for a child to remain living with family. Becoming part of a fostering family can mean a lot of changes for carers' children and grandchildren. They will have to learn to share their grandparents and their time and home. Some children may display difficult behaviour and it can be a shock for them. However, foster carers advise that fostering has positive effect on their children, allowing them greater empathy for others.

I'm worried about the children that may be placed?

People often think that children in care are 'naughty' children who may have lots of behavioural problems, this is not the case. Children in care come from all walks of life, backgrounds and cultures. They have different needs and experiences like all children. They are in care through no fault of their own but circumstances at home. They can be scared, experiencing separation, loss and uncertainty. Due to their experiences, they may have challenging behaviour – who wouldn't? We train our foster carers to look beyond this behaviour and understand the reasons behind it. Children in the family can often have a very positive effect for children in care and act as a role model and a calming influence.

What will it mean for my own childcare arrangements with my parents?

This is a very common worry of children and a completely understandable one. The modern family has evolved and fostering services understand that many working parents rely on their own parents to assist with childcare. Your fostering service will look at this as part of the assessment and we will carefully consider what commitments your parents have. We will ask your parents to carefully consider how fostering may impact both practically (taking children to and from school, meetings etc) and emotionally (how will your children feel, jealousy etc). We want children in care to be part of the family and for you to have a positive experience being part of their lives.

What about staying with our parents?

Extended family and older children who live away from home may still want to stop over night at the foster carers' home occasionally and this can still happen. All it takes is a little forward planning; it is a positive experience for a foster child to be included in family get-togethers. Checks may be required on family members who stop over – but these are routine and non-intrusive. Simple changes may be required to keep the foster child and everyone in the family feeling safe and the fostering team will be on hand to offer advice along the way.

Talk about it

Talk to your parent's fostering service about any worries you have. Your fostering service may be able to put you in touch with other fostering families who have been through the process.

At home with Fostering



Further information

Further information and advice is available from **The Fostering Network** at www.fostering.net or **British Association for Adoption & Fostering** at www.baaf.org.uk

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