



change
their
life & yours...



/FosterAdoptRdg

Could you foster?

We need foster carers for Reading children of all ages

There are lots of different ways you can help Reading children - even if you only have a couple of hours a week. If you can offer a safe, caring and loving environment we would like to hear from you...

0118 937 3740

www.reading.gov.uk/fostering

fostering
& adoption



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

What types of fostering are there?

There are many different types of fostering. Some you will need to work at full time, others you can work around your current commitments.

Short Term

Short term foster carers can look after a child from a few days up to 2 years. The majority of children will return to their family home once their situation has been resolved. Your role is to provide a stable home with the support and care the child needs for as long as it is required. In addition you play a crucial role in ensuring that the child has regular contact with their own family and, when the time comes, help them to prepare for their move back home.

Respite Fostering

Respite foster carers provide temporary care to foster children so our regular foster carers can have a break. Respite carers may also offer support to families who are at risk of breakdown because they don't have other support available to them.

Respite fostering is a way of getting involved without having a child living with you full time - a child or children will usually stay with you for just a few days at a time. How often you provide respite depends on your availability.

Short Breaks

Short Breaks carers provide regular day or overnight care for children and young people with disabilities living at home with their families to give them a break from one another. The Short Break scheme provides support to children and young people with a range of disabilities, including Autism or Downs Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, visual or hearing impairments or a combination of physical and learning difficulties. Because of this we need Short Breaks carers to commit to the young people and their families for ongoing periods in their lives.

Day care

Day care involves looking after a child either for a few hours or the whole day. This is often a tea visit after school.

Overnight care

The child will stay with you for a longer period. This could be one night, a whole weekend or even longer. This is dependent on what you can offer and what the child or young person needs. Overnight care is built up to slowly so that the child becomes familiar with their Short Breaks carer.

Long Term Fostering

If a child is not able to go back to their own family they will need looking after for the rest of their childhood. Wherever possible we try to find new parents for younger

children through the adoption process – for older children and teenagers this is not always appropriate.

Your role is to provide a home for the child – offering the stability, support and guidance all young people need to help them enjoy their childhood and, as they mature, learn the skills/confidence they need to grow into secure and independent adults. Reading supports the Staying Put initiative which enables young people to remain with their carers post 18 years old as it is important for our young people to remain connected and part of a family.

You will also help the child keep in touch with their own families if they want this.

Long term placements are carefully planned. Children are matched with carers who are from a similar background and can meet the child's own ethnic, religious and cultural needs. Both parties are given time to get to know each other so we can be sure that the placement is successful. Carers and children often develop lasting relationships and it is not unusual for them to keep in contact with each other after the child has left care.

Supported Lodgings

Supported Lodgings carers provide a home environment for a young person from the age of 16 into adulthood. The young people could be care leavers, unaccompanied asylum seekers or any young person unable to live with their own family. Supported Lodgings carers need to have a spare bedroom and have some experience of working with or looking after young people.

Emergency Fostering

Where there is an unexpected family crisis children may need to be moved very suddenly. We need foster carers who can take on children with little or no notice. This could be anything from a couple of nights to 28 days.

MST-FIT (Multi Systemic Therapy-Family Integrated Transition)

Carers can also choose to specialise and attend training to become an MST-FIT carer. MST-FIT aims to provide permanency and stability to young people within placements. It is an intensive family and strength based programme that works with parents/carers of a young person to support positive change in relation to problematic behaviours. MST-FIT carers are specially trained foster carers who care for young people for the first 2-3 months of the intervention whilst MST (Multi-Systemic Therapy) works with the family/carer.

You will receive extra training to become an MST-FIT carer.

The facts about fostering with Reading Borough Council

Lots of people think that to become a foster carer you must be married, live in your own home, be financially well off and have children of your own. What you are able to offer a child is much more important to us than your personal circumstances. Reading has a diverse population and the children who need looking after come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Our policy is to recruit suitable carers from all walks of life

It doesn't matter if you own or rent - what is important is that you have enough space to accommodate an extra child/young person in your home and ideally you should have a spare bedroom.

Pets are not usually a problem - unless they are known to be dangerous. If you own a dog we will want to know how you control it.

Lots of people think that you have to have a "traditional" family to be able to foster - this is simply not true. We welcome applications from all sorts of families/households. You could be married, living with your partner or single. You could have children (of any age) living at home with you, your children may have left home or you may not have children of your own. Your sexuality is not important - we do not discriminate against gay men or lesbian women.

We do not exclude people because they are overweight or disabled. However, fostering can be very demanding and you do need to be in reasonably good health in order to care for a child or young person. There

are some medical conditions that would prevent you from fostering or restrict the type of fostering you do. If you smoke we will not approve you to care for children under 5 years of age. We are happy to consider your application if you are older or younger, provided you are in good health.

We always try to place children with families who understand their background and can offer a home that meets their religious, language and cultural needs. Reading has a diverse population - we need foster carers to look after children from the white, African, Caribbean and Asian Communities. We also need people who are able to look after children who are of mixed race.

It doesn't matter to us whether you work or not - we need carers to look after children with all sorts of different needs. Some children will need a full time carer (in which case it is better if you don't have a job) while children who are older and at school during the day need care out of school hours. There are a few types of jobs that would prevent you from fostering, but in most cases the job you do won't stop you from becoming a foster carer although the hours you work may restrict the type of fostering that you can offer.

You do not need specific qualifications for most types of fostering, but you do need plenty of common sense, patience, the willingness to learn, the flexibility to adapt to different situations, a good sense of humour and the desire to make a difference.