



Parent and Child fostering

Information for applicants



Parent and Child Fostering Scheme

Parent and Child fostering is a specialist area within fostering that allows Camden to carry out robust assessments when babies and young children are at risk of being permanently removed from their parent's care.

Parent and Child placements make it possible for the child to remain with their parent, whilst the assessment takes place, that the relationship with the parent is not disrupted.

A parent is supported by the foster carer to demonstrate their abilities and potential for learning in relation to the range of skills needed to provide a good standard of care for their child. Through their day-to-day involvement with the foster carer, parents are helped to appreciate and understand their readiness, or otherwise, to be a full-time parent.

Whatever the outcome of the assessment, children and parents can take forward learning from their placement experiences, which will help them face future challenges.



Parent and child foster carers will:

- Have a parent and child live with them in their home, generally for a structured 12-week period.
- Build a supportive relationship with a vulnerable parent and help them learn how to look after their child safely.
- Make daily written logs that significantly contribute to the assessments of both the child's needs and the parents' abilities to meet these needs.
- Work closely with the social worker completing the written assessment for the court and any other agencies, such as the health visitor.
- Have good communication skills, patience, and understanding of parental challenges as well as detailed knowledge of good infant care.



Support and training

Due to the nature of these placements, time for yourself is built into the arrangement. Ten hours a week of paid support is provided on top of time needed for training and attending meetings.

You will be closely supported by a social worker who will:

- Determine with you whether a proposed placement is viable and if so, identify any additional resources that are needed.
- Meet with you every two weeks and will support you with the development of your assessment skills.

- Arrange and Chair the pre- placement planning meetings and the monthly review meetings and take a lead in troubleshooting any difficulties that may arise.
- Identify your training requirements and progressively enhance your training further by providing access to the training schedule across all six boroughs.

Foster carers will be expected to complete at least 3 training courses per year and take part in the Parent and Child Foster Carer's Support and Development Group.

Parent and Child foster carers meet every month to share experiences and knowledge, and take part in training and plan further training.



Who can apply?

You don't have to be an existing foster carer but if you are you may be ready for a new challenge or want to offer the accumulated experience of years of parenting skills you have developed to a struggling parent.

If you are not currently a foster carer you may have transferrable skills that can be applied to parent and child fostering, such as a nurse, teacher, nursery worker or youth worker or you may have very different experiences but have suitable qualities for this role.

You can apply as a single carer or as a couple for this scheme.



Payments

Foster carers providing Parent and Child placements will be paid an allowance of up to £62,000.00 a year.



Benefits

As a Camden foster carer you receive priority for placements over any other agency or local authority.

You will also be eligible to receive the following:

- Council Tax exemptions for Camden Residents.
- Generous Fees and Allowances, and outstanding training provision.
- Retention payments for 2, 5, 10, 15 & 20 years.
- Free RING doorbell.
- Paid membership for Blue Light Card.
- A £900 thank you paid if you refer a friend or family member, and they are successfully approved as a foster carer.

You also benefit from the joined-up way we work in Camden, where there is very close communication between fostering supervising social workers, the children's social workers and our specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service for children in care.



Requirements

- Adequate space in your home – a bedroom large enough at least for one parent and a child, who also will be sharing your kitchen and other living spaces
- You need to be able to provide the level of supervision required (assessment placements can only be made in households that have at least one carer at home full time (i.e. not out of the home for work and/or other regular commitments))
- Ability to protect other household members (in particular children) in relation to risks that some placed parents may introduce into the home: it is not practicable to combine task centred fostering with parent and child fostering, and the vulnerability/needs of all other children in the household need close consideration



Competencies

- To be an approved foster carer (or meeting the competencies so that approval will be possible) for children and young people aged 0-18 years
- Ability to work effectively with a parent(s) who are resident in your home – appropriately balancing the need to keep professional boundaries with being warm and supportive
- Strong relationship building and communication skills for use with anxious, distressed and potentially resistant parent(s) and their networks
- Detailed knowledge of current expectations for good infant and childcare, proven caregiving ability for infants, and the ability both to model and teach good parenting skills
- An ability (both for yourself and for your household members) to ‘stand back’, encouraging the parent to meet their infant or child’s day-to-day care, stimulation, affection and attachment needs
- Ability to manage your own and other family members’ feelings and emotions in order to approach your task with the parent in a non-judgmental manner, with due regard to any differences in culture and values
- Ability to make calm and objective judgments about what is safe care and what is not, with the ability to be assertive in managing any parental responses that pose a risk to the child
- Ability to work to the Fostering Minimum Standards and Guidance



- Ability to produce regular, type-written records that are clear, precise and balanced, recognising that your records will be used within the assessment process and may need to be provided to court as evidence in Care Proceedings (the standard of recording needed in assessment placements is very much higher than in support placements). Foster carers will need to be able to distinguish between fact and opinion when making observations and records
- Ability to advocate effectively within the multi-agency network, to speak on behalf of the child, to assist the parent to put their case, and to articulate your own and your family’s needs

The application process

Step 1 You contact us

Call us for an informal chat to see if fostering might suit you. We will ask you about your reasons for considering fostering, what support you have, your previous experience and the room you have available in your home. If we are both happy to carry on with your application to foster, we will send you an information pack and an application form. We will invite you to an information session, where you can find out more about fostering. We will also arrange a convenient time for a home visit.

Step 2 Home visit

A social worker from the fostering team will visit your home to decide whether it is suitable for fostering a child and to share information with you about fostering in Camden. They will talk to you about any experiences you have had that may make you a suitable foster carer, and about yourself as a person. You will also be expected to talk about your family and their feelings about fostering. The social worker will write up the discussion and you will both decide whether to move forward to the next stage – the Skills to Foster preparation group

Step 3 The Skills to Foster preparation group

This is a compulsory three- day course, which is usually run over a 1-week period. It will give you an understanding of fostering in Camden and will include why children come into care as well as your role and responsibilities as a foster carer. You will take part in various exercises and group work activities. Following this group, a joint decision will be made by the trainers and you to see if fostering is right for you. If you go ahead, you will move on to the formal assessment process.

Step 4 The assessment

The formal assessment usually takes up to four months. During this time, you and your partner (if it's a joint application) will talk about your background, your own experiences of education and employment, and your lifestyle. This will include religion, culture and day-to-day living, as well as your skills around caring for children and young people. The discussion will also cover the impact that fostering may have upon you and your family.

As part of the assessment process, we will carry out various checks on you, your partner (if applicable), and any other member of your household who is aged 16 or over. These checks will be made with your local authority, the police and your doctor in order to find out if you are suitable to be a foster carer.

We will also ask for references from previous and current employers, as well as personal references from people who know you well and can comment on your ability to care for a foster child.

Step 5 The fostering panel

The Fostering Panel is made up of a group of people who have knowledge and experience of fostering and who are independent of Camden council.

The role of the Panel is to advise and recommend to the council whether applicants are suitable to be Camden foster carers, though the final decision is made by the Director of Children's Safeguarding and Social Work.

Your social worker will prepare an assessment report in support of your application to the Panel and you will have a chance to read this beforehand and make any comments. You will also be invited to attend the Panel if you wish.



camden.gov.uk/fostering
020 7974 6783

