



Becoming a

FOSTER CARER

- 1 What is fostering? The definitive guide.
- 2 Why Channels & Choices? What makes us different.
- 3 How does it work? The application process.



Learn how to
therapeutically
parent a child.

If you're a little unsure about the process of becoming a foster carer, this guide will give you an introduction to fostering, a list of reasons why we think Channels & Choices might be perfect for you and an understanding of the application process.

We are proud to be the only service to offer:

- ✓ Support from our in-house therapy team
- ✓ Access to our on-site SEMH school
- ✓ Unrivalled financial package
- ✓ Enhanced matching process to ensure long term fostering placements

1 What is fostering?

Every year nearly 40,000 children come into the care system, through no fault of their own. Unfortunately there are not enough foster families to look after them.

Every child deserves a safe and loving home, with people to nurture and care for them. Foster carers step in to provide this.

So what's the difference between fostering and adopting?

When you foster a child, their birth family or local authority remains legally responsible for the child, and the child also keeps their surname. With adoption, the child takes the family surname and their new family becomes completely responsible for them. Adoption is also permanent, whereas fostering has a number of alternatives. Sometimes fostering can be for a few days - we call this "short term fostering". Other times it can be long term, and even permanent.

Why does a child need to be in foster care?

Children need fostering for many different reasons. It can be that their family is too ill to look after them or there has been a breakdown in their family. It can also be due to neglect or abuse and the social care system has decided the child isn't safe.

Who can be a foster carer?





You don't need any qualifications to be a foster carer. You just need compassion and the desire to give a child a loving home.

All we ask is that you have a spare room in your home. We welcome people from all walks of life, regardless of religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age or income.

NEXT: So why choose Channels & Choices?

Can I foster?

Every application is different and is judged and assessed individually. In the first instance, make sure the following applies to you:

-  You'll need to be over 21 but there's no upper age limit.
-  You'll need a spare bedroom in your house. You can be renting or owning.
-  You'll need to have British citizenship and the right to work in the UK.
-  You'll need to have the desire to provide a stable and loving home for a child in need.



2 Why choose Channels & Choices?

Choosing a fostering agency to go with is a daunting decision. All fostering agencies in the UK have very strict guidelines to stick to and they are inspected every three years by OFSTED. However, not all fostering agencies are the same. **Here are some things that make us different from other agencies.**

Channels & Choices

was established in 2005 by a group of qualified social workers who were, and still are, passionate about making a difference to the lives of children in care.

Initially starting with one residential home, Channels & Choices has grown into a centre of excellence in therapeutic children's services, whilst still maintaining a small local agency feel, and consists of eight children's homes, a fostering agency and a DfE registered special school - The Sallygate School.

These three departments work closely with each other, backed up by a multi-disciplined therapy team to provide a wrap around service incorporating our award winning Stepping Stones programme ensuring every child receives the best possible care, helping them reach their full potential.



1 Our carers get time to meet and spend time with children before matching for fostering. We have had a number of successful placements whereby carers met children at one of our activity days and the relationship grew organically from there.

2 100% of our children go to school. We know children being out of school adds additional pressure at home and can lead to a breakdown of placement.

3 We can access therapeutic support and assessment instantly. This includes psychiatry, prescribing medication, ADHD and ASC assessment.

4 Locality Groups: Additional to our support groups are our Locality Groups - we fund regular meetings for foster carers to do something together to build positive relationships and networks of support to compliment the high level of support from the C&C team.

5 We achieve a permanency rate of 87%, meaning children are placed successfully and remain stable within families.

**Are you already a foster carer?
Thinking of transferring to us?
Click here to find out more about
the transfer process.**

3 The next steps...

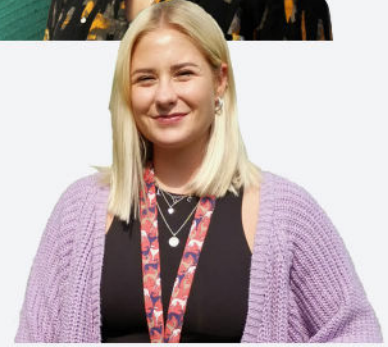
1 A no-obligation quick chat with Kerrie or Sarah

Kerrie and Sarah are our fostering admin queens, and a quick telephone conversation with them is the very first step. It's not invasive or personal, we just need to know where you are at in your fostering journey, whether you are local, and if you have a spare room.



2 A home visit from Lucy

After the initial phone call to discuss your situation, the next step is a home visit from Lucy, our Senior Practitioner in the Fostering Team. You don't need to clean the house from top to bottom, we'd much rather find out about the real you. Lucy would like to find out more about your background and life and why you want to be a foster carer. She'll also explain how the application process works, the background checks we have to undertake, and she'll also explain how much you'll be paid and the training you'll take. If everything still looks good, Lucy will give you an application pack (and a bag of goodies of course!)



3 Your application

Take the time to fill out the application pack. It's in three parts, initial application, consent to checks and references, and DBS checks. Don't worry if some of it doesn't make sense - we're here to help you with the whole process - from start to finish.



Assessment and panel.

Following your application, you will be assigned an independent social worker to carry out a fostering assessment. They'll visit your home to speak to you and find out more about you and your life. This allows us to understand more about you and gives us the information we need to start thinking about what sort of placement would suit you best.

After a successful assessment, you'll be invited to undertake some training called "Skills to Foster" at our head office.

Your application will then be taken to a panel of people who are skilled in different areas of fostering, education and childcare who will make their recommendation.



4

Get in touch.



If you have any questions or would like an initial telephone conversation with Kerrie or Sarah

call 01304 361888

or visit www.channelsandchoices.co.uk/talk-about-fostering



Channels & Choices Therapeutic Children's Services
Kearsney Manor, Alkham Rd, Temple Ewell, Dover CT16 3EQ

