

Growing up is tough.

If you're not able to live with your birth parents or family, it's even tougher.

Perhaps you struggled with behaviour when you were younger and turned your life around. Maybe you work with young people needing extra support and structure, or have dealt with difficult children and teenagers. If you're a patient person you can make an extraordinary difference by fostering a young person.

Why these young people need you

Caring for complex older children and teenagers in crisis is a rewarding and specialist branch of fostering. These children and young people, who are aged 10 and older, might have complex circumstances, experienced abuse or neglect, or have parents unable to care for them. They can have behavioural or learning difficulties, and may not be able to cope with being in school all of the time. They might need help to tackle their use of drugs and alcohol, or be known to the police.

It's for these reasons they need an enthusiastic and supportive Foster Carer or Foster Family who can be there for them. Someone who can offer them stability, guidance, and equip them with the life skills to help them change their lives for the better.

There are two different schemes for challenging young people: Home Based Care and the Single Placement Scheme.

A Home Based Carer supports one or more young people, aged 10 and above, who need extra support. A Single Placement Carer exclusively fosters one child or teenager at a time who needs one-to-one, on-call support.

What do I need to be a Home Based Carer?

- Resilience, understanding and a good sense of humour
- Be an advocate for a young person by attending meetings about them, for example, at school
- Have a good support network of friends and or family
- Be able to manage young people with challenging behaviour and extremely complex social needs
- Have at least one spare bedroom.
- Be able to help vulnerable young people settle into your home and overcome social difficulties
- Attend meetings and contribute to the social work assessment, working closely with social workers.

Could I be a Single Placement Carer?

Single Placement Carers are unflappable, enthusiastic and able to work as part of a professional team to help a child or young person with high level needs - behavioural, learning, emotional or medical. The main or sole carer will need to be based at home and available to support them with anything that comes up. Because of the young person's needs, they will need to be the only child or young person in the household.



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What next?

To find out more, please phone our friendly Fostering Team on

0800 587 9900

or visit

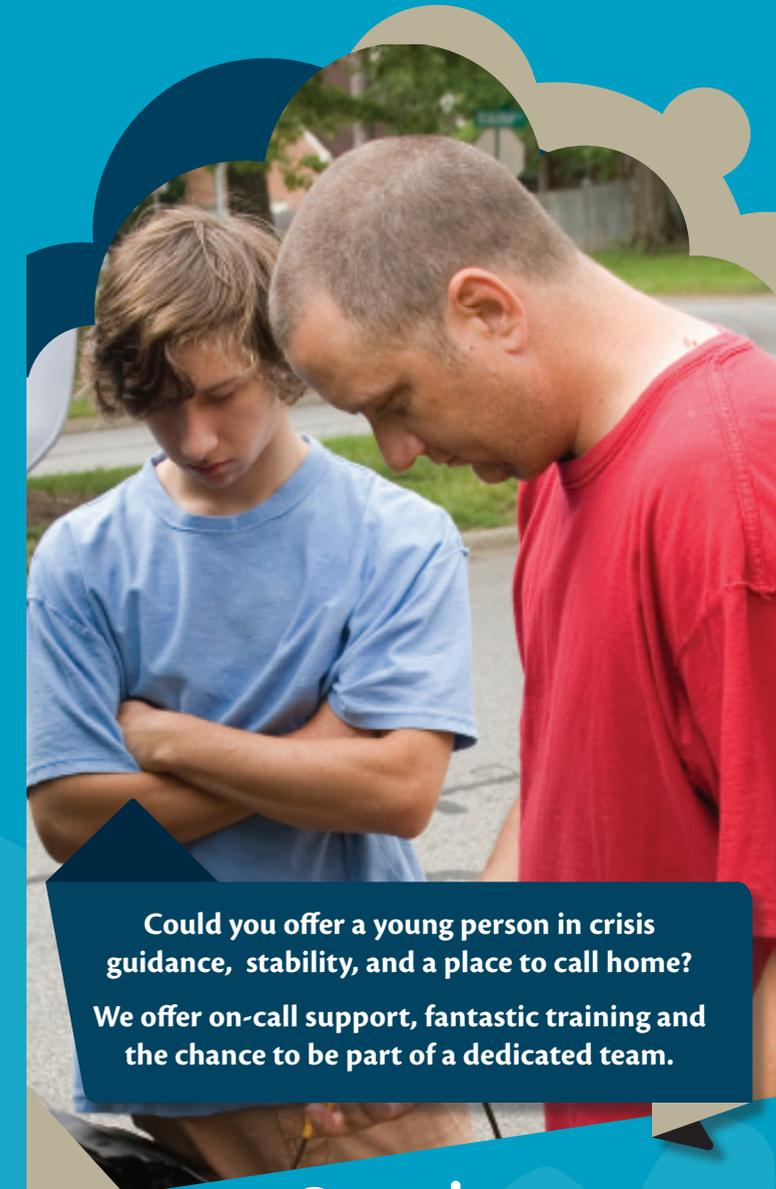
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To request this document in an alternative format, please get in touch.

Caring for Challenging Children and Teens



Could you offer a young person in crisis guidance, stability, and a place to call home? We offer on-call support, fantastic training and the chance to be part of a dedicated team.

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How do I apply to help a challenging child or teen?

As a potential carer, we'll take you through a careful process of assessment. This includes looking at your skills and abilities, empathy, and children and their families.

You could be young or old, married or single, with or without children of your own.

Formal qualifications are not necessary, but we will ask you for references. Checks will also be made with the Disclosure and Barring Service and your GP.

The assessment process generally takes between 6 to 8 months, when you will attend a Foster Panel meeting, who will recommend whether to approve your application.



What can we offer you?

All our Carers get

- An on-going training programme to give you the knowledge and skills you need for your role as a foster carer
- On-call support is available
- Support during the placement-matching process
- A dedicated team of social workers and support staff who will keep in regular contact with you
- A supervising social worker, offering support and monthly supervision
- Support, trips and rewards for your own children, for their hard work within fostering
- Bi-monthly support group meetings, where you can meet other foster carers and share your experiences
- A competitive fee on top of the standard weekly fostering allowance
- Payments providing an income between placements
- A high level of support and supervision from the Fostering Team.

What our carers say...

Helping a young person or child with complex needs can be very challenging at times, but also very rewarding.

Below are some of the comments from carers:

“ I was brought up with quite a lot of domestic violence around me. I can really relate to the children, and what it's like to have nothing, so I can deal with it and a lot of things that crop up. There's always something new that comes to the table when it comes to fostering young people but nothing fazes us ”

“ The admin support staff are excellent. They are very helpful and also knowledgeable about the current situation, also good listeners. I feel very supported when I call in ”

“ The support group meetings are great. It allows us carers to get together and have a catch up ”

“ Always focus on the positives, not the negatives. It's a small statement, but it actually means a lot. And praise the young people for the smallest thing – tell them they have done really well ”

“ The team get in touch regularly to see how I am, not just to ask something of me, which is nice ”



How to find out more

0800 587 9900

or visit our information-packed website

www.fosteradoptsomerset.org.uk

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