

# Frequently Asked Questions

We understand that there are so many different people wanting to foster with various home/life situations. We have therefore tried to answer as many of the questions we think you may have. If you have any other questions, please contact us to speak to one of our team.

## Would a criminal record stop me from fostering?

Not necessarily, it would depend on the nature of the offence. However most minor offences would not exclude you; the important thing is to discuss this with us at the earliest opportunity.

## Will I wait long for a child to be placed with me?

No; currently we have children waiting for loving homes. Following your approval your social worker will support and advise you in finding a suitable match.

## Can I foster if I smoke or vape?

Yes. However, there will be limitations with the children you are able to foster as we are not able to place babies and children under the age of 5 years with carers who smoke or vape.

## Will I have to give up work to foster?

You do not have to give up work to foster and many of our carers are working. You will need to consider if your work is flexible. For example, do your working hours allow you to drop off and pick up a child from school. Would it be possible to take time off due to a child's illness, school holidays or to attend occasional meetings or training?

## Do I need a support network?

Yes. You will need to give consideration as to who is in your life who will be able to support you in your fostering role. We ask all new carers to identify at least one person who is able to support you if you are not available for any reason, for example if you are attending training and need a foster child collected from school.

## Do I need to have any special qualifications to foster?

No, particular qualifications are not necessary, it is your personal attributes and skills which are most important. We provide a comprehensive training package which will develop your skills as you continue your career in fostering.

## I already have children of my own, can I still foster?

Yes. We value the skills and experiences you can offer as a parent. For your children, living with foster children can be very positive and benefit them through companionship, friendship and a sense of self-worth in sharing their homes and themselves with children who need them. We value the children of foster carers and recognise the role that they play in fostering. We always ensure that they are consulted and involved in the assessment process.

## How much will I be told about a young person before they're placed with me?

We will provide you with as much information about the young person and their background as possible, before you decide whether to accept the placement. Sometimes we have to place children in an emergency; in this circumstance we may have very little information. But a planning meeting will follow very shortly and we would hope that by that stage more would be known about the child's circumstances.

### **Do I have to drive?**

Driving is not an essential requirement to be a foster carer. You will need to consider how you will transport children to school, family time and activities.

### **Do I have to live in Sefton?**

No, however the vast majority of children attend Sefton schools and have their family links in the borough so you will need to think about the practicalities of travelling to Sefton.

### **Can I take a child on holiday?**

We always encourage foster carers to include children in their family holidays. There will be some instances where this is not possible however this will be fully discussed with you and alternative arrangements made.

### **Can I foster if I have pets?**

Yes, we think pets are great! Pets can really enhance the experience for fostered children and are a great ice breaker. We will take your pets into consideration through your assessment.

### **How would I get paid?**

The scheduled payments are paid fortnightly, directly into the bank account details you have provided.

### **Do I have to become self-employed?**

Foster Carers are classed as self-employed and thanks to a generous foster carer tax relief it means that for most foster carers, they will pay no tax on their fostering income.

### **What support do I get in working out tax?**

The latest information from HMRC on tax arrangements for Foster Carers (<https://www.gov.uk/support-for-foster-parents/tax-arrangements>)

Information, support, and 1-2-1 advice including a free Tax and Benefits Q&A Session, is available via your membership to FosterTalk (<https://fostertalk.org/tax-national-insurance-and-benefits-for-foster-carers/>)

**Call Fostertalk today for help and support 0121 794 228**

