

FOSTER WITH SUTTON



FOSTERING
SUTTON





Introduction

Thank you for your interest in fostering with Sutton.

By caring for vulnerable children in our local community, you can make a massive difference in their lives and help shape their futures for the better.

Fostering changes young lives. Thank you for your interest in beginning your fostering journey with us.

Sutton is a rewarding place for foster carers. Our foster carers receive excellent support from our small yet consistent, committed and friendly fostering team.

We look forward to you joining the biggest family in Sutton!

Best wishes,

Jonathan Williams
Director of Children's Services

“(I am) very proud of him... it is what makes fostering worthwhile. Had he not come into care he may have had a different life altogether.”

Sutton foster carer

What is fostering?

Fostering is a hugely rewarding role which makes a massive difference to vulnerable children and young people.

Fostering changes lives - literally!

Foster carers provide children who can't live with their own families a safe, secure and stable home for them to live, develop and thrive. This could be for a few days, months, years or more permanently until they reach adulthood. Children may need to be in foster care at any age during their childhood; from birth to eighteen.

Types of fostering

Fostering a child may be on a short-term or long-term basis.

Short-term

Short-term foster placements can range from an overnight stay up to two years. Short-term carers offer children a stable and secure home while decisions are made regarding a child's long-term plan. Children may return home to their birth family, go on to be cared for by other family members/carers or move on to their adoptive family.

Long-term

Long-term foster carers care for children who, for whatever reason, are unable to live with their birth families. Children will remain with their long-term carers until they reach adulthood.

It is important to note that we assess all carers initially as short-term carers.

“It's been a really positive experience for both her and I...it has had a positive impact on both of our lives.”

Sutton foster carer (short breaks)

We also have a need for foster carers who are able to care for children with disabilities. This can be on a long-term or short-term basis.

Respite

Respite carers care for children for short periods of time mainly at weekends, school holidays and emergencies.

Short breaks

We also have a scheme which provides short breaks for children with disabilities who continue to live with their birth families.

Short breaks carers offer children with disabilities regular, planned and ongoing support at weekends and during school holidays. Short breaks carers work closely with parents to ensure care is offered to children which meets their specific needs.

Who can foster?

We need more foster carers to care for the children in our borough. We are recruiting carers for children of all ages, but are particularly in need of people who would like to care for teenagers and sibling groups.

Applications are welcome from single carers, couples, those who work and those who have retired, and people from all ethnic and faith backgrounds and communities, including the LGBTQ+ community.



What do you need to be a foster carer?



A spare room

Foster carers need to have a spare bedroom for a child.



Experience

Foster carers do not need to have specific professional qualifications although it is preferable that you have some childcare experience in a personal or professional capacity.



Age

There is no upper age limit in fostering but you do need to be fit and healthy.



Skills and qualities

Foster carers need passion for caring for children. As a foster carer you would be working with a range of different people and would need to have competent writing and computer skills.



Availability

You can still work if you foster if your working arrangements are flexible enough to meet the demands of fostering, including taking children to and from school, attending meetings at short notice and taking the child to contact with their birth family.

“They ask me what are the skills I need? Do I need to be qualified? Do I need to be trained? And the only question that I ask is...Do you have a heart?”

Sutton foster carer

6 Why foster with Sutton Fostering?

When it comes to fostering with Sutton, we ensure that our foster carers and the children they care for are given the best possible support.

As a not-for-profit fostering agency, we're focussed on meeting the needs of the child.

Benefits to fostering with Sutton include:



Excellent support from Sutton fostering team

Sutton fostering has a supportive atmosphere owing to the small, friendly team. As a Sutton foster carer you would have regular support from your allocated supervising social worker. There is minimal turn-over of staff meaning your supervising social worker will develop a good working relationship with you and your family.



Keep Sutton children in Sutton

As a Sutton foster carer you would be helping Sutton children to stay local. Coming into care is very unsettling for a child. Having to move to an unfamiliar area can make this trauma worse, especially as it can involve a very long journey to and from school. Sutton foster carers will have Sutton children placed with them, which generally leads to better outcomes for the child.



Team around child

When you foster with Sutton, your supervising social worker and the children's social worker both work for Sutton Council. This means that both follow the same policies that are designed to work in the best interests of our local children, to achieve the best outcomes for them.



24/7 foster carer support

In addition to support from the social workers, you will have access to out of hours support from our Emergency Duty team.

All Sutton foster carers have access to therapeutic support.



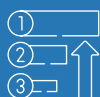
“Sutton is a borough that really does work with their foster carers”

Sutton foster carer



Access to comprehensive and local training and development

As a Sutton foster carer you would have access to support and comprehensive training package.



Priority over placements/ shorter gaps between children's placements

Sutton will always try and match the child needing a placement with their own foster carers first. This is because we have recruited, assessed and trained our carers and therefore know how well they will be able to meet the needs of children that need to be fostered. Placing children with Sutton carers means that we are able to keep the children close to their friends, family and school.



You can combine working and fostering

As a Sutton foster carer you can continue working if you have sufficient family and social networks to be able to meet the needs of the child.



Local support network

As a Sutton foster carer you would be part of a stable local network of experienced foster carers. This network provides informal and formal support, for example through support groups and social events.



Access to mentoring

As a Sutton foster carer you have the opportunity to be mentored by an experienced, long standing foster carer in your first year of fostering.



A generous fostering allowance

We know that our foster carers are motivated by making a difference in the lives of children and young people. We also recognise that it is important that our carers are suitably rewarded for their hard work and dedication. Therefore, we offer a generous and competitive allowance and fee package as well as additional payments to our foster carers. Please see our Fees and Allowances leaflet for more information.

Fostering journey - the assessment process

The first step on your journey to becoming a foster carer is to attend one of our events or contact us directly by phone, email or via the contact form on our website.

Initial home visit

Once you have more information, then we will arrange an initial home visit for you to meet with one of our supervising social workers. This will give you a chance to ask more questions and also gives us a chance to understand your individual circumstances better in person.

Assessment process

Following the initial visit, if it is felt that you are ready to progress to the next stage then you will be sent an application to begin the fostering assessment process.

Before you can become an approved foster carer you and your family will need to engage in a formal fostering assessment. The assessment is split into two sections: Stage One Checks and Stage Two Assessment visits.

The first stage involves us undertaking a number of checks and references including criminal records checks and medicals.

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“My foster carer is a teacher
and that led me to becoming
a teacher as well”

Care experienced young person

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Stage two is a formal assessment process in which an assessing social worker will visit you and your family in your home a number of times in order to consider your suitability to foster. The social worker will compile a report at the end of this stage detailing the discussions you have had and their recommendations regarding your suitability to foster. We aim to complete the report within 16 weeks.

The Skills to Foster training

During the fostering assessment you will be asked to attend a three day pre-approval course which will equip you with the basic knowledge and skills you need to begin fostering. This is part of your assessment process.

Fostering panel

Once the assessment is complete, your assessing social worker will compile a report about your suitability to foster. This will then be presented at our fostering panel who will make a decision as to whether they recommend you to become an approved foster carer.



Already fostering?

Are you a registered foster carer with another agency and looking to transfer to Sutton? If so, please contact us to discuss further with a member of our team.

We welcome experienced foster carers who are interested in transferring to Sutton. We recognise the skills that experienced foster carers can bring and are keen to discuss this with you.

Sutton is a great Local Authority to foster for and a number of our current carers have transferred from other agencies. If you decide to transfer to Sutton, you will find that:

- Sutton fostering has a supportive atmosphere owing to the small, friendly team
- There is minimal turn-over of staff meaning your supervising social worker will develop a good working relationship with you and your family
- The supervising social workers in the team have good working relationships with the children's social work team which means the sharing of vital information remains a priority
- As a not-for-profit fostering agency, Sutton maintains child-focused practice in all aspects of the child's care plan

Foster carers can only be registered with one agency at any given time and are always free to choose which agency they register with.

For those considering transferring to Sutton, the process we follow is covered by The Fostering Network's transfer of foster carers protocol. It is important to note that we will need to undertake our own fostering assessment and seek references from your current agency. We aim to complete this in 12 weeks provided we are able to obtain a copy of your previous fostering assessment.

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“I specifically hand picked Sutton just because of what I'd read, what I'd heard... and Sutton is amazing. The support from Sutton local authority is amazing and the support that I get from my supervising social worker is phenomenal.”

Sutton foster carer

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What to do next?

Get in touch with us:

020 8770 5563 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Email fostering.duty@sutton.gov.uk

Visit fosteringinsutton.gov.uk

