



Making moves in fostering



Your guide to becoming a

Foster Carer

homefostering.org.uk



Welcome

Thank you for considering fostering. Your decision to find out more about becoming a foster carer could change a child's life forever, and this is your first step. Our pack will guide you through what fostering involves, tell you a bit more about HOME and our model, the support we provide to our carers, and how you can start your journey with us.

You will already be aware that HOME is different to other fostering agencies. It might sound obvious, but one of the things you need to become a Foster Carer is a suitable home. That doesn't mean owning the property or living in a certain postcode. It means having a space that's big enough, welcoming enough and stable enough to give children a place to settle.

At HOME we've built a creative model that actively supports 'would be' Foster Carers to secure suitable housing. Our agency is the first of its kind in the UK, using international best practice, and combining this with the power of social enterprise - creating impact, reinvesting in the region and sharing our learning nationally.

Across Greater Manchester we have a lot to be proud of. We live in a place known for its welcoming and aspirational people, people who want to improve the region for generations to come. If this sounds like you, someone motivated to make a difference, who believes every child deserves the chance to grow up in a loving home - you're in the right place.

Made possible by  SOCIAL ADVENTURES

Social adVentures is a pioneering social enterprise dedicated to improving lives and strengthening communities. All profits are reinvested back into Social adVentures and the community.

With a deep commitment to social justice and innovation, we lead new approaches to care, inclusion, and enterprise. Our expansion into children's residential care and fostering reflects our belief that every child deserves the chance to feel safe, supported, and able to thrive.



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What is fostering?

Fostering provides vulnerable children and young people with a temporary safe home to live in while they are unable to stay with their birth families. Fostering is so much more than just a roof over their heads though and whether children live with you for a few nights or a few years, fostering families can make a difference that lasts for a lifetime.

Children are only ever removed from their family homes if there are serious concerns about their safety and wellbeing and there are lots of different reasons why children might not be able to live at home for now. None of those reasons are the responsibility of the children though and so we need foster carers who can embrace all the differences that children come with, and can work with them, their family and the professionals involved with them to achieve the best outcomes.

There are a range of different types of fostering homes that are needed and at HOME these include:



Short-term
anything from
a few days up
to a year



Long-term
throughout their
childhood and
beyond



Respite
Usually just a few nights or a
couple of weeks whilst a child's
usual carers are having a break

There is a national shortage of foster carers at the moment, and this is especially true for homes that are big enough for siblings to be able to live together. And that's why at HOME, we are particularly encouraging people to come forward who know how important it is for brothers and sisters to be able to live together and how much that relationship matters, not just in the here and now, but for the rest of their lives.



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Who can foster?

Just as the children that we look after are all different, we need foster carers who are different too, there's no such thing as a perfect foster carer. You don't need to have any special qualifications but having a good understanding of children and what they need is helpful – whether that is through your work, your friends and family or being a parent already.

That means that your race and culture, your gender and gender identity, your religion, your disabilities, your sexual orientation and whether you are in a relationship or not, do not impact on the welcome you will receive at HOME.

We believe that every foster carer deserves to feel respected and supported. We celebrate diversity and are proud to work with people from all communities and life journeys. Together, we can create a nurturing and accepting environment where every child feels valued and loved.

What's important...



...is that you are motivated and committed to make a difference in children's lives; that you can be patient, creative and nurturing with children who have experienced trauma that's impacted on their wellbeing and that you can work alongside all the other people in the child's life to do what's best for them.

Foster carers need to be open-minded, accepting, and willing to embrace diversity. They need to have empathy and want to take the time to understand why a child is behaving in the way that they are. They need to be respectful of difference, to be kind and to be curious.





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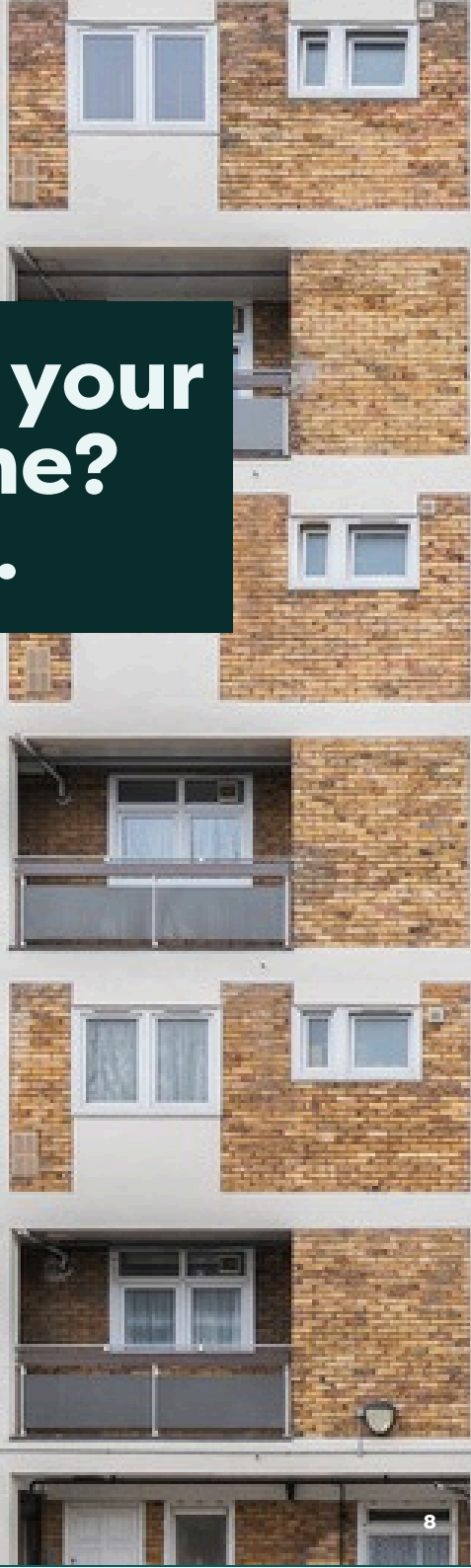
No space in your current home? No problem.

You may have enquired with a different agency about fostering and found that one of their essential criteria is having at least one spare bedroom and so you were immediately ruled out from moving forward.

At HOME having a spare room is one of the things that doesn't matter.

We know that there are lots of great people out there who have the qualities, passion and skills that are needed to be a great foster carer, so if this is you and your property has been holding you back then you're in the right place!

We can help you to find a new HOME that will enable you to go from 'would be' carer to approved and looking after the children who need you.





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There are a few specific requirements you need to become a HOME foster carer.

You **must**:

- ✓ **Be over 21 years old**
- ✓ **Live within 10 miles of a Greater Manchester Local Authority (or be willing to move to within this region)**
- ✓ **Have the legal right to work in the UK**
- ✓ **Be willing to work with us in an assessment process to really understand all that you have to offer as a foster carer**

And there are some more things that will help:

- **The ability to work well with different people** – From social workers to birth families, teamwork is key.
- **Knowing when to ask for help** – Support is always available, and asking for help shows strength and ensures the best care.
- **Being organised** – Managing routines and appointments helps create stability.
- **Having problem solving skills** – Every day can bring new challenges, and creative solutions make a big difference.
- **Being a good listener** – Children need someone who truly hears them.
- **Showing empathy and understanding** – Recognising how others might be feeling is essential for building trust.
- **Patience** – Change takes time, and children need carers who can stay calm and consistent.
- **A sense of humour** – Sometimes, laughter is the best way to cope and connect, and little laughter can go a long way in brightening tough days.



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Our support package

Our support offer is different to other fostering agencies because alongside the usual things that agencies offer like pre-approval training, ongoing learning and development opportunities, a 24/7 telephone line and peer networks, we will help you to overcome the barrier of suitable property.

Practical and Social Support



24/7 Support from our team.

Our small, close-knit team means you'll know us, and we'll know you. In addition, you'll have your own dedicated, qualified supervising social worker to offer guidance, emotional support, and regular face-to-face visits.

Practical help when you need it

Our skilled bank staff can jump in fast, from providing a helping hand around the house during busy periods to helping with school runs, family time, medical appointments, or mentoring young people.

Training that builds confidence

A mix of in-person and online training keeps your skills sharp, covering all essential topics to help you understand and support your children effectively.

Fun, friendly community events

Seasonal celebrations, activity days, and family outings that help build relationships, create memories, and strengthen your fostering support network.

Mental health support for you and the children you care for

Access to counselling, therapy, and wellbeing resources to help manage trauma, stress, and emotional challenges.



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Peer support led by experienced carers

Safe, supportive sessions where carers share experiences, offer tips, and help each other navigate the fostering journey.

Planned breaks to recharge

Respite care and short breaks can be arranged throughout the year, with bank staff available to spend time with children when you need time to rest.

FosterTalk or Fostering Network membership included

24/7 helpline, financial and legal advice, plus discounts on family activities, insurance, and more.

Training & qualifications



- **Training (online and in person)** to get you ready for and onwards throughout your fostering journey, including training on children's specific needs when you are considering a match.
- **Monthly workshops** in your first year of approval on the essential topics for your fostering registration.
- **Annual Personal Development Plan** to support you to become the best carer that you can be right from the start.
- **Access to a professional fostering qualification** after your first year with us.



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Our financial package

Finances should never be a barrier to becoming a foster carer. Our generous payments are designed to ease financial pressures, allowing you to focus on what truly matters, creating meaningful, joyful moments with the children and young people you support.

HOME's financial package for foster carers is made up of 3 parts.

1

Fostering Allowance

Foster Carers will receive an allowance to cover the costs of looking after each child and young person that is placed with you. In addition to this, foster carers will receive a professional fee to recognise and reward the incredible role they play.

This is paid based on the age of children and young people and scales higher if you're looking after more than one child or young person.

2

HOME Rent Subsidy

Rent/mortgage is almost always the biggest monthly expense for all of us. At HOME, we're here to help you move into larger properties so that you can fulfil your dreams as a foster carer.... but we also know that means bigger bills.

We want to help give you property security and as such will provide an ongoing contribution towards the cost of your property for the entire period you foster for HOME.

3

Moving HOME Grant

We recognise the financial challenges of moving home and want to make this as easy and painless for you as possible. Our Moving HOME Grant will help you with expenses like the rent deposit, initial rent costs while you're settling into your new home before any children are placed with you and new furniture and furnishings for your home.

Separate to all of this though is a budget we'll give you to buy personalised items for the foster children's bedrooms once you know who will be moving in and what their interests are – things like duvet sets and posters for the walls.



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Finding your property



At HOME, we are committed to helping you find and move into a new home with enough space to care for children and young people.

HOME will work with you to discuss your property requirements based on the number and profile of children and young people you plan to care for once you're approved. We can tailor support to include property viewings, giving advice and guidance on space, layout and location.

Then, once we're agreed that fostering is right for you and your assessment is progressing well, HOME will work with you to build a move-in package so you can be settled in your new home prior to going to panel for approval.

How do you find the houses?

HOME will help you to identify and secure a private rental property.

We'll source larger properties throughout Greater Manchester, places where families want to live, close to similar communities and networks of support.

Can I choose where I want to live?

Absolutely. It's one of the reasons that we've chosen to look at rental pathways as our first stage of development. Greater Manchester is a huge area, and we don't yet know where our amazing carers will come from. We understand that you may already be part of a community, close to family and friends and that's really important for your support as you foster.

Can I choose my own property?

You are welcome to find your own property though we do have a property specification. This ensures that any house our carers live in meets certain standards.

More details can be found on the [Property Support page here.](#)





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Our carer recruitment process

Our carer recruitment process



1 Making contact with our team

You'll make the first move by heading to homefostering.org.uk and enquiring about joining HOME. Our friendly team will take a few details, answer any early questions, and share the dates of our upcoming information events. If you want to you can book on and find out more about how fostering with us works and ask any questions.

2 Getting to know you & first visit

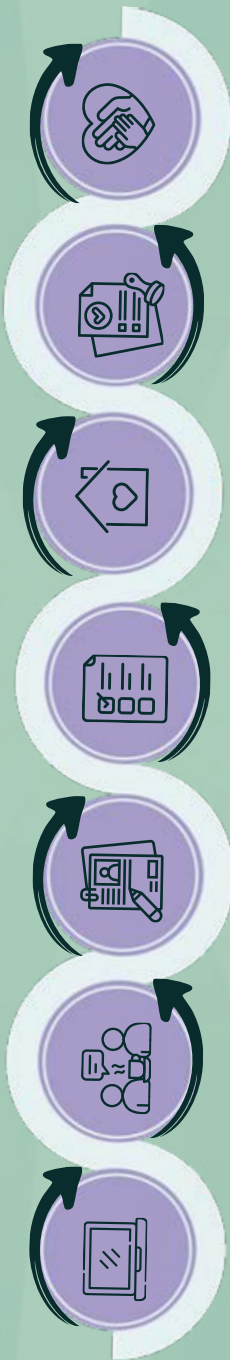
If you'd like to take the next step with HOME, just fill in our quick online form. One of our social workers will give you a call or pop over for a visit. We'll chat about what fostering with HOME looks like, get to know you and find out what you're hoping for.

3 Starting your application

Once we have all your information, we'll invite you to formally apply. We'll share the application form and, with your consent, begin our first-stage checks. It may seem like there are a lot of checks that we undertake, but it's really important that we know as much about you as we can in order to make sure you can look after our children safely.

4 Your training journey

You'll also be invited to our 'Skills to Foster' sessions, where you can meet other future carers and learn more about fostering, what life is like as a carer and about the many children who need a family. At HOME we have an extensive programme of training to give you the skills and understanding that you need for as long as you foster with us.



5 Doing the formal assessment

During this stage, your worker brings together everything we already know about you, and spends time getting to know you even better. They'll keep you informed about what we're covering and what's coming next. We'll also speak to your referees and work with you to pull all the information into a report for panel. This usually takes 5-6 months.

6 Making the decision

You'll meet our independent panel with your social worker, and they'll make a recommendation on your approval. If it's a "yes", the paperwork goes to our Decision Maker, who makes the decision that you will officially become a HOME Foster Carer. We'll then assign you a supervising social worker (usually the one who assessed you) to support you as a newly approved foster carer.

7 Joining the family

Now that you're approved, we can start talking to you about children who may be a good match for your skills and experience. When we all agree that we've got the right family for the children, we'll arrange introductions, visits, and, if it's going well, set a moving-in date.



So what next?

There is clearly lots to think about and simply enquiring about fostering in a traditional sense is a big deal. At HOME, there's even more to consider – are you willing to move house? Can you look after one or more children? – but also so much more to gain.

If you've been thinking about fostering for a while but were held back by your home, there's the opportunity to move into a bigger house with our support, in the area you want to live.

If you were to come to HOME to foster brothers and sisters it will definitely require time, energy and patience, but we know that staying together means that children will do better. They have each other as well as you, and you have the opportunity to watch their relationship flourish and know that you have given them that opportunity. It shouldn't be a privilege to grow up alongside your siblings, and you can make that difference.

Our friendly team would love to be able to help you explore whether or not becoming a HOME carer is right for you. We're on hand to answer any questions you might have, to help you think through your own unique circumstances and to provide you with any further information that you feel you need.



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Find us on socials, search:

'Home Fostering'

