

SHARED CARE

Working in Partnership

Information Pack for Foster Carers

SHARED CARE FOSTERING

*A Specialist Fostering Agency for Children and Young People
with Disabilities*



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Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) is a specialist-fostering agency catering for children and young people with disabilities. Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) is at the forefront of providing loving and nurturing foster families to disabled children and specialise in recruiting carers to look after children with complex needs.

The main aim of Shared Care fostering services is to provide stable and high-quality foster care placements that value, support and encourage them to grow, develop and lead a fulfilling life.

Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) is a part of Shared Care Services Ltd which was founded in 2003 under the Companies Act 1985 as independent domiciliary care agency, which is also registered with the Care Quality Commission.

Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) is registered with Ofsted which inspect and regulate to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages.

Why do children need fostering?

It is impossible to describe the typical foster child – they can be of any age from 0 – 18 years old and from any social, ethnic or religious background. The one thing that many have in common is that for some reason their family is in a crisis and the child may have been harmed or abused. For that reason, they need to leave the family home and be placed with foster carers. Also, parents may need some form of respite. Most children require warmth, patience and understanding at a time of stress and uncertainty.

What is it all about?

In the past when children were separated from their families only a small number of children were placed with foster carers the majority went to residential care units. Today, this balance has changed and more children are looked after in family-based provision – foster care. For many of the children placed in foster care, it is a temporary arrangement and they will return to their own homes. Some, may, however, be adopted, placed into residential care or a permanent fostering placement which will be determined according to the child's needs.

Fostering is about looking after someone else's children in your own home at a time when their own family is unable to do so. This can be for several reasons, for example

Human beings are the only creatures on earth that allow their children to come back home. ~Bill Cosby,

family illness, family breakdown or perhaps a situation where the child's safety is threatened. If you feel ready and able to commit to giving a child a family life just when they need it the most!

What does fostering mean?

If you are 21 or over and have a spare room, you can apply to be a foster carer. Foster carers are urgently needed in all parts of the UK and a great variety of people can apply. Many foster families have their birth children. Others are

childless. Some are married and others are single, divorced or widowed. Some are older people whose own children have grown up and maybe living independently. Families from all ethnic and religious backgrounds are needed. There are UK National Standards on Foster Care and a Code of Practice (available from Fostering Network, see www.fostering.net). There are also National Minimum Standards against which fostering agencies are inspected.

Foster carers look after children in their own home; they do not have parental responsibility for the children. This remains with the birth parents or sometimes is shared between the local authority and the birth parents, as a result of a court order. This means that important decisions about the child, for instance, which school they should attend, continue to be made by the parents or local authority while the foster carers are responsible for the child's everyday care and needs.

Children can range from pre-school to primary, senior school-aged young people, children of mixed parentage and children with disabilities. We also need foster carers for single children and groups of brothers and sisters too.

Fostering can be hugely rewarding for you, your children and foster children who can sometimes look back on the memory of your care as the one positive thing that made a difference to their lives.

You need to think carefully about why you want to be a foster carer. It is often not an easy job and can have an enormous impact on your family, especially your children if you have any.

Sometimes children present very difficult and destructive behaviour. You can be up night after night changing wet sheets. You may have to deal with embarrassing public tantrums. Fostering will change your life and daily routines. Children who need to be

What's done to children, they will do to society. ~Karl Menninger

cared for by foster carers have often experienced erratic parenting; therefore carers need to be there for the child. They will have to take and collect children from school, support education and learning; provide opportunities to learn new hobbies and interests; attend medical appointments and work alongside many other professionals.

The different kinds of Fostering?

People who decide to become foster carers have to think about what sort of fostering they would like to do and are best suited to doing. As long as you are available for a child, have a spare room and have knowledge or experience of childcare – we will consider your fostering application.

(a) Short Term Fostering

This is most people's idea of fostering. Once you become an approved foster carer, children will come to stay with you for several weeks or months until they can return home, be adopted or permanently fostered. Children often feel confused or upset about living away from home. So, as well as offering a welcome home, you will also need to be a good listener and comforter. Temporary fostering can be exciting and very rewarding – you never know who will be coming to stay or for how long. Over the years, you will play a vital part in helping many children to feel safe and happy while they are with you. You will help prepare them to move to a secure future. Even years later some children may write to let you know how they're getting on and one day they may even bring their children to visit you. On the other hand, it can sometimes be upsetting to say goodbye to children you've become very fond of. The service will provide support and training around this area. Temporary fostering can also be demanding and challenging both physically and emotionally, but there is always support and help available.

(b) Long Term Fostering

The difference between adoption and permanent fostering relates to the legal status of the child. Often children requiring a permanent home are aged between 7 – 13 years old. If you wish to foster permanently we will assess you in the same way we assess all foster carers. Once you are approved we will match you to a suitable child. You will meet several times and get the chance to see how you get on before deciding to go ahead. You will receive all the payments, training opportunities and support to which foster carers are entitled.

The world is as many times new as there are children in our lives. ~Robert Brault,

(c) Respite Care

We are looking for families who can offer regular respite facilities to children and families, by providing either one-off or regular periods of supportive respite.

Respite carers can work with the agency to help children and families, who may be experiencing some difficulties to stay together.

(d) Short Term Breaks

The short term break scheme is for disabled children and young people who have a wide range of needs. Carers on the scheme offer children and families the opportunity for regular breaks which can range from a couple of days to a couple of weeks. We always need people who have previous relevant skills and experience but many successful applicants have no experience at all.

Am I the right person?

There is no such thing as a typical foster carer, you may:

- ✳ Be from any ethnic or cultural background
- ✳ Be from different religious backgrounds
- ✳ Be single or married
- ✳ Already have children or not
- ✳ Be employed or unemployed, working flexible hours
- ✳ Own your own house or be a tenant
- ✳ Be the same-sex couple
- ✳ Be disabled

What's most important are your individual qualities. Things you will need to be a foster carer:

- ✳ Time
- ✳ Patience
- ✳ Tolerance
- ✳ Energy

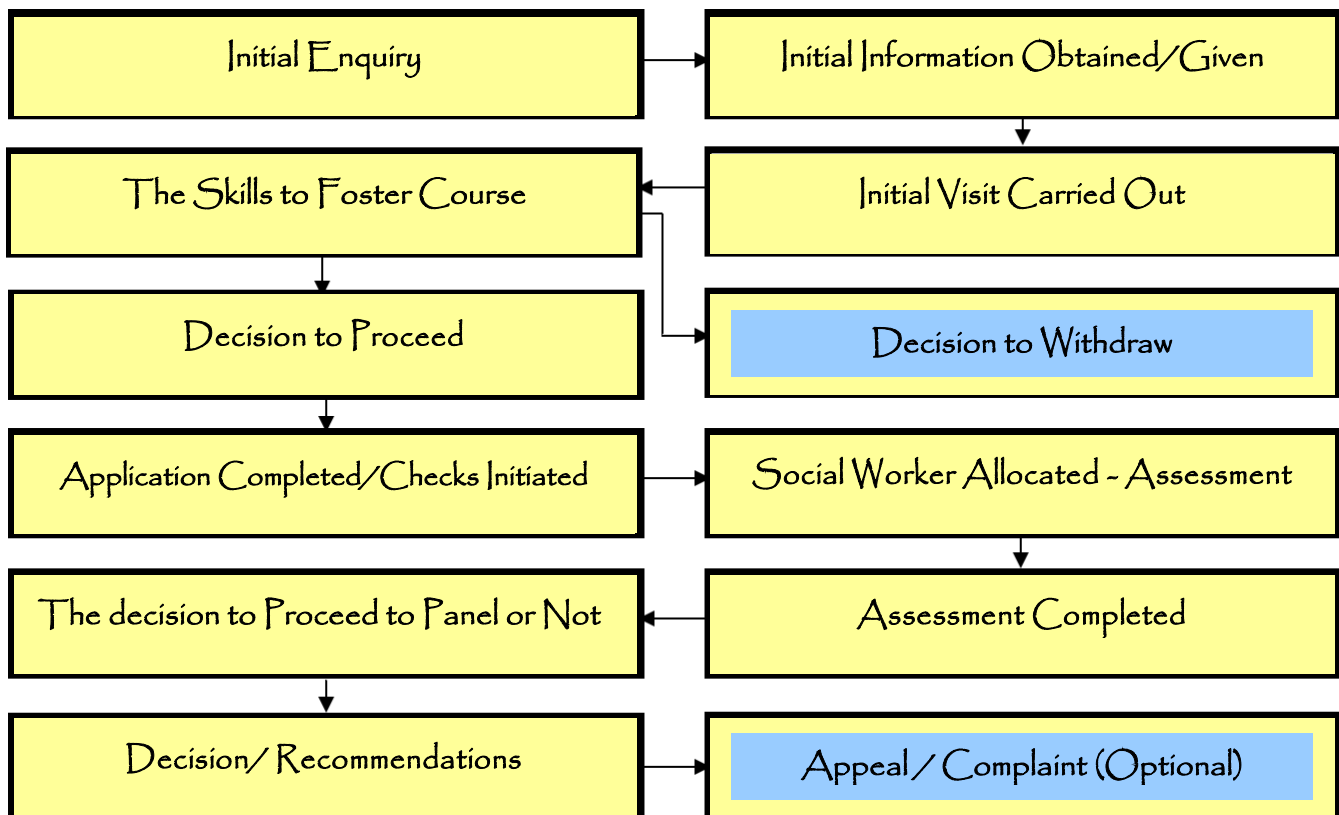
Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see.
~Neil Postman

- ✦ Willingness to work as part of a team
- ✦ Honesty
- ✦ Dedication
- ✦ Supportive and understanding of children's needs
- ✦ Have a sense of humour and
- ✦ Commitment

Rewards

- ✦ You'll be making a real difference
- ✦ You'll be helping to keep families together
- ✦ You'll be helping families reunite
- ✦ You'll be giving children a positive experience of family life
- ✦ You'll be helping children to feel good about themselves
- ✦ Fostering can enrich your experience of life
- ✦ Fostering can also be a very challenging and rewarding career
- ✦ You will receive payments to help financially
- ✦ You will develop skills and knowledge from training which may lead to a recognised qualification.
- ✦ You will meet and develop relationships with other foster carers

The Approval Process (We aim, with your cooperation to undertake this process within 6 to 8 months from receiving the offer form).



What support is available?

- ✱ Preparation courses; The Skills to Foster
- ✱ Personal assessing social worker Financial
- ✱ Support; Fostering Allowance Individual
- ✱ supervising link workers Information
- ✱ workshops and training courses Peer
- ✱ Support Co-coordinator Buddying Scheme
- ✱
- ✱ Regular Support /Informal coffee mornings
- ✱ 24-hour helpline service
- ✱ Foster Carer Association support
- ✱ Committee meetings
- ✱ Training

Preparation Courses; The Skills to Fostering

Preparation courses are run on regular intervals at different times to suit you e.g. weekdays, evenings or Saturdays. All prospective foster carers are required to attend a preparation course as recommended by the Fostering Network. The course is based on adult learning methods and consists of a mixture of presentation from staff and group discussions, which draw on personal experience. Put formal teaching to the back of your minds and don't even think about exams! The preparation courses rely on grouped and individual contributions, a commitment from all participants to attend is crucial and the programme relies heavily on individual willingness to share feelings, beliefs and experiences.

Confidentiality is particularly relevant. An understanding not to share any personal information from the group with others. This is particularly relevant given the sensitive information about children and their families that foster carers routinely access. The preparation course now involves confidentiality training. The training to become a foster carer will focus upon valuing the uniqueness of individuals and families. Foster carers need to be able to respect individuals and groups for their different characteristics and learn about how prejudice affects everyone.

All participants will be encouraged to consider their backgrounds and make a commitment to constructively challenging discriminatory behaviour.

When you have brought up kids, there are memories you store directly in your tear ducts. ~Robert Brault

Preparation and approval processes

To be approved as a foster carer you have to show that you have the skills and abilities to begin to foster. During the assessment and preparation process you will work with your assessing social worker to gather information and knowledge about your level of competence, against the following core competence criteria:

- ✦ Caring for Children
- ✦ Providing a safe and caring environment
- ✦ Working as part of a team
- ✦ Own development

We aim to complete your assessment within 6–8 months however; this can vary as the assessment goes at the applicants' pace.

Statutory Enquiries and Criminal Record Bureau Enquiries

You will need to give consent for us to make enquiries with several agencies and provide names of 3 referees to support your application. We have a legal obligation to follow these up and may not be able to share the outcomes with you. A report detailing the core competences and your circumstances will be completed jointly and will be presented to the Shared Care Services Fostering Panel. Newly approved foster carers generally start their fostering career as Level 2 carers.

Skill Level Scheme

All foster carers continue to evidence competencies in carrying out the tasks specified in the joint working protocol and accordance with the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. The core competencies continue to be a significant feature in the professional relationship you will have with the Fostering Service, and they form the basis of the Skill Level Scheme. Foster carers can progress through the skill levels of 1 to 4 by developing a portfolio of evidence of the skills, abilities and knowledge they have, and by applying for progression. Along with your supervising link workers support, consideration will be made to the suitability for your progress based on the assessed evidence provided.

If your children spend most of their time in other people's houses, you're lucky; if they all congregate at your house, you're blessed. ~Mignon McLaughlin

Fostering Allowances

Each fostering agency decides on its payment structure. Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) base the fostering allowance on the Fostering Network recommended rates. The allowance is paid to the carer to cover the daily needs of children and young people including food, clothing, personal care, household costs and travel. Additional entitlements are given for birthdays, festivals and holidays. Discretionary payments can be paid for items including uniform, clothing and transport. Following approval as a foster carer further details are provided.

Post Approval Training

Once you become an approved foster carer we offer full and comprehensive training opportunities to develop your knowledge and skills for example the NVQ in Health and Social Care training.

Consultation

Foster carers are involved with all parts of the service from fee reviews to marketing campaigns and we run regular consultation groups for all carers.

Counselling/24-hour helpline

All Foster carers are given out of hours support from Shared Care Services (Fostering Division)

Fostering Service Statement of Purpose

Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) Statement of Purpose is available to all applicants on request.

The hardest part of raising a child is teaching them to ride bicycles. A shaky child on a bicycle for the first time needs both support and freedom. The realization that this is what the child will always need can hit hard. ~Sloan Wilson

The Assessment Process – A Guide to Prospective Foster Carers

Introduction

Deciding to foster a child is a big step. Naturally, potential foster carers are apprehensive about what an assessment entails, and to lessen this anxiety we believe in being as open as possible about the whole process. For this reason, the coverage given to this topic is quite detailed and lengthy.

Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) carry out foster carer assessments. In the assessment process, there are many aspects governed by the Children's Act 1989.

It might be helpful to take a brief overview of the various stages of potential foster carers to go through during the assessment process.

The First Step

Assuming that you fulfil the Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) basic criteria (e.g. on health, your accommodation has the physical space for a child, etc.) and are deemed after a brief interview or discussion on the telephone to be a potential candidate, you will probably be invited along to an introductory meeting on foster care. This meeting will allow you to find out quite a bit more about fostering and to ask as many questions as you want about the whole process. At the meeting, you can start to find out how the Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) conducts its assessments and gain a very rough idea of the likely timescale should you choose to apply.

You should also use this opportunity to find out what the agency is looking for in prospective foster carers, how foster care becomes the plan for some children, and what are the 'typical' difficulties and frustrations applicants face, etc. If after the meeting or shortly afterwards you wish to pursue your interest further you may be invited to attend a 'preparation for foster carers group'.

The Preparation for Fostering Group

These groups consist of prospective foster carers like yourself and Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) staff and exist to acquaint you with the range of issues surrounding fostering and foster care. These groups tend to meet between 4

The future depends on what we do in the present. - Mahatma Gandhi

to 6 times, usually spaced over several weeks. You will usually get the opportunity to meet experienced foster carers, and you may well have the chance to listen to visiting specialist speakers. The groups are a chance for you to question your attitudes and beliefs concerning children and fostering. They are also a chance for staff to start to get to know you.

After the sessions, you may be asked to think about your application a bit more, and then confirm your willingness to continue. We will not accept your application immediately but would like you to go home and to think about all you have seen and heard and to discuss the issues with your partner (if applicable) as well as family and friends.

Home Visits

The next stage, should you decide to continue is when you begin to receive 'home visits' from a social worker. The social worker will talk to members of your household both individually and together during these visits.

Bear in mind throughout this stage that the entire assessment process is not solely about deciding whether or not you will make 'suitable' foster carer(s) – it is also about providing you with information so that you can decide whether or not becoming a foster carer is right for you and your family.

The primary purpose of these home visits is to build up a comprehensive profile of you and the parenting environment you can provide and to determine the type of child(ren) whose needs you will best meet. Most social workers will assess your suitability to be a foster carer using a document often referred to as the "Form F".

Throughout this stage and in co-operation with you, your social worker will start to fill in your Form F. Upon completion, if there are any points of disagreement between you and your social worker they can be recorded. Finally, having read and agreed to what has been written, all sign the document.

Over the next few pages we shall examine the assessment procedure, and in particular, the structure and content of the form F which, once completed, is the major part of a final report that is submitted to the panel.

It is important to point out that your social worker's role is to assist you through the process and to identify your needs and abilities to see if these can be matched to children who are likely to need to be fostered. Ideally, you will build up a close and

The surest way not to fail is to determine to succeed - Richard Brinsley Sheridan

an honest relationship with your social worker and the finalised Form F will reflect this, being arrived at by mutual agreement.

The whole process, from first home visit to being presented to the Panel for consideration, can take anywhere from about 6 months or so depending on various factors e.g. how long you had to wait for the Panel meeting to consider your application, CRB checks, medical reports etc.

The Assessment Form

The commonly used assessment form consists of five parts. Bear in mind that although the form is extremely comprehensive (which is understandable in the circumstances) your social worker is there to assist you through it. Try to view the report as a joint venture, while acknowledging that most social workers will feel quite comfortable compiling the report, after all, they will probably have done it many times before. You on the other hand will be stepping into totally unfamiliar territory. Remember too that you are not expected to be 'perfect applicants' – social workers are not looking for them either. Many know that they do not exist!

Part 1.

This part of the form gives factual information about you. Your agency social worker and you are asked to:

1. Provide details of the Shared Care Services (Fostering Division)

Name, office address, phone number, etc.

2. Provide your basic details

These include the language you speak at home, your religion, ethnic descent, occupation, and current or proposed hours of work. You are also asked to provide a recent photograph of yourself.

3. Outline the children in your household

This includes their ethnic descent, the type of school they go to, and their relationship to you.

Impatience never commanded success. Edwin H. Chapin

4. State what type of care you are offering

There are several options – including 'respite care', 'long-term fostering', 'emergency placement', etc.

5a. Consider the type of child or children that you will be suitable to foster

There is a detailed checklist included, which is to be completed only after a full discussion has taken place between you and the social worker regarding the issues involved. The checklist is intended to reflect a mutually-agreed position between you and the agency, outlining what you all agree would be the most appropriate type of child(ren) for you to foster. It begins with an outline of the children: First, the age range – for example, that you will be allowed to foster a child or children between the ages of 4 and 9. Secondly, what gender child(ren) will you be suitable to foster. Thirdly, would you be capable of looking after a child or children from a different ethnic or religious background to yourself?

There then follows a comprehensive checklist detailing various possible characteristics and backgrounds that you and the agency agree it would, or would not, be appropriate for you to consider fostering. There are over forty possibilities, so the following is only a selection:

- ✱ Children with hearing impairment.
- ✱ Children with severe learning difficulties.
- ✱ Children who may have been physically abused.
- ✱ Children who are unlikely to make relationships easily.
- ✱ Children with Disabilities etc.

5b. Describe you and your family

This covers you and your family's personalities, interests, experiences etc. It is designed to be a 'snapshot' of your family that will aid your agency in the initial stages of matching you with a child.

6. Provide details of any other children

For example, details of any of your children living elsewhere.

To climb steep hills requires a slow pace at first. William Shakespeare

7. Provide details of other adult members who are part of your household

For example, grandparents living in your home or a lodger.

8. Detail other significant adults who will have contact with any child of your household regularly

For example, a neighbour or a close friend who visits you frequently, or perhaps a baby sitter you use for children within the family.

9. Detail your accommodation, neighbourhood and mobility

You need to outline your neighbourhood – its ethnic composition, its schools and recreational facilities, and the public transport that is available to you. You are then required to give a simple description of your accommodation and the proposed sleeping arrangements for any child. You are asked for health and safety information, and finally whether or not you intend to move house soon: and if so, what the implications of such a move would be for any child placed with you.

10. Detail any restrictions on pets

What pets do you already have (if any), and would there be any limitations placed on a child who might bring a pet with her/him?

11 a. Confirm whether or not you have a permanent home

You also need to provide your date of birth and marital status, with confirmation that the appropriate documentation has been seen by the social worker.

11 b. Describe your work and educational history

This includes periods of raising a family, unemployment, part-time employment and voluntary work. You must also provide your National Insurance number for confirmation of these (where applicable).

Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out. Robert Collier

11c. Detail the various compulsory checks that have been carried out

These statutory references include police checks and personal referees. If you have a criminal record you need to make us aware of this and ask them if this would stop you being able to foster. In many cases as long as you have not committed an offence recently and the offence did not involve violence against a child the Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) may still be prepared to consider your application. You will also be expected to take a medical and complete a medical questionnaire. If you have concerns about a previous illness affecting your application you should speak to your GP about it. Other areas that may be checked include education and employer references (where applicable).

12. List of detail of your home visits

This includes the number of times the visits have taken place, and who was seen at each one. You also need to describe the number and type of preparation group meetings attended, and to describe the ethnic mix of the group and aspects of the training covered, as well as your participation and what you felt had been useful. Any further areas of training that might be required should also be identified. Finally, for those who have not had the opportunity to attend a preparation group, there is a chance to list what preparation or training has been utilised instead.

13. Provide details of medical information

The date of your medical examination, comments from the agency medical adviser, details of any physical, mental or emotional disabilities within your extended family, and details of any disabled children.

14. Give details of personal referees

You are asked for the referees' relationship to you, the time that they have known you, and comments on the information they have provided. In England and Wales, there is a requirement for the referees to be personally interviewed by the agency social worker, and a record of these visits should be attached to the form.

There is no happiness except in the realization that we have accomplished something.

Henry Ford

Part 2

This part of the form details your attitudes and life experiences relevant to fostering a child. Social worker and you are required to:

1. Provide information on your background

Your parents, siblings and other significant family members. What is the significance of culture and religion in an individual's upbringing, and what are your views on your upbringing and the impact that has had on you? What are your attitudes to and experience of people with disabilities? Describe your experience of education and work (including unpaid or voluntary work) and your attitude to work and unemployment. What effect, for example, could unemployment have on family life? Detail your interests and talents, followed by how you perceive yourself – your personality, racial and cultural identity, strengths and weaknesses.

2. Describe your partnership (if any) and how that partnership works

What qualities do the partners bring to the relationship, what makes it positive for each of you, how do you support each other, how do you cope with problems? How might fostering a child affect this relationship – for example, how will you cope with a child who becomes attached readily to one partner and much more slowly to the other? How are decisions made between the partners, and is there wider family involvement in the decision-making process? What are the strengths and vulnerabilities of the partnership? Have there been previous significant relationships, and if so what has been learnt from these. Do they affect the present partnership? Are there children from any previous relationships and if so how will those children be affected by the decision to foster and by the child themselves?

3. Provide information on your support networks

These are the people who you are in regular contact with and who will support you in caring for a foster child. They include family, friends, neighbours and community and religious groups.

It was a high counsel that I once heard given to a young person, "Always do what you are afraid to do." Ralph Waldo Emerson

4. Give more details of existing children in the household

Describe their personalities and temperaments, their relationships and any special talents or needs that they might have. How have they been involved in the preparations for fostering, and what is their understanding of the implications of this for themselves?

5. Describe other adult members of the household

This includes significant adults who don't live in the home. What is their relationship to the family members, their attitude to your intention to foster, and how important is that attitude to you?

6. State the reasons why you have decided to foster

What motivated you to consider applying to foster? Are both partners (where applicable) equally committed to this course of action?

7. Describe the family's lifestyle

What activities does the family undertake together? Are there any religious or cultural practices that are important? How is affection shown, what roles do different individuals take, what expectations are there and how are these accommodated within the family unit? What personal space do individuals expect within the family? What is the family attitude to food, and to potential eating difficulties that child might bring with them?

8. Examine your attitudes to Britain as a multicultural and multiracial society

How is your understanding of it reflected in your present lifestyle? How can children be educated to take a positive view of such a society? What impact can discrimination have on a child, and what understanding do children already in the household have of discrimination?

9. Outline your parenting abilities

You are asked for a description of your experience of caring for or working with children. What is your understanding of child development, and of how children in

Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash.

George S. Patton

foster care might be affected by early experiences? What are your own childhood experiences? In what way would you do things differently to your parents, how flexible would you be in your approach to caring for a foster child? How will you ensure the protection of any child from physical or sexual abuse? You are then asked about behaviour management. What are the rules of the house, how are approval and disapproval shown, and what effect could these methods have on an abused or neglected child? Finally, how would you cope with a child from a different culture or ethnic background, or with a different religion or language? What changes would be necessary for your lifestyle, what difficulties could the child, the existing family and the wider support network face, and what practical experiences do you have that might help you to resolve these?

10. Outline financial and other support that you might need

What are your attitudes towards money; will you give up paid employment (where applicable); and if so, how will you cope with the loss of income? Who will undertake childcare?

11. Outline various placement and post-placement considerations

What understanding do you have of the effects of loss and poor attachment upon a child? What is your understanding of behavioural difficulties, and what behavioural difficulties would you find it difficult to cope with – for example, bed-wetting, over-affection, or aggression?

What effect is being fostered likely to have on a child's identity? Do you understand that some black or ethnic minority children might grow up with a negative self-image if fostered by carers of a different race and culture?

Could you care for a child who has been sexually abused, and would you have difficulties in coping with sexualised behaviour resulting from such abuse? How would other children in the family react to such behaviour? How do you view emerging sexuality in adolescence, and how would you ensure an appropriate sexual education?

How do you view adolescent experimentation – for example, with drink and drugs – and what areas of possible difficulty can you foresee both for yourself and the foster child?

*If you do not hope, you will not find what is beyond your hopes.
St. Clement of Alexandria*

Where applicable, depending on the type of child it is suitable for you to foster, what understanding do you have of possible issues surrounding the health of a child placed with you, and what is your likely ability to cope with those issues – for example, how would you cope with fostering a child with a life-threatening disease?

Do you feel able to meet the needs of a physically impaired child, or a child with learning difficulties, what local resources are available to you, and what help are you likely to require (for example, adaptations to your accommodation)? What understanding do you have of the emotional and sexual needs of such a young person?

What is your understanding of possible reasons why children become 'looked after' (taken into care) – for example, parental poverty/physical immaturity/drug abuse/depression etc.?

How far do you acknowledge the importance to a child of being able to understand their past and of maintaining positive links with parents, and will you be able to facilitate such links – for example, by encouraging the child to maintain contact with their family, exchange letters and photographs, keep in phone contact?

12. Describe post-placement support

What type of support Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) will offer and do you know how to access that support or any other resources? What consideration has been given to 'disruption' (the foster care placement breaking down) and the effect on those concerned?

The last part of the report is a summary of the whole form. Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) social worker will be asked to detail how you relate to children, and how well you will work with the agency, the child's family, and other significant adults. What are your strengths and weaknesses, and in what areas might you experience difficulties? What are the agency social worker's recommendations? Finally, are there any points of disagreement between you and the agency social worker?

You and the social worker upon completion will then sign the form.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.

Aristotle

Please try to remember

The assessment process is not solely about establishing if you are "suitable foster carers". It is just as much concerned with providing you with information. The more information you are given, the better equipped you will be to decide if, and what type of fostering is the right choice for you.

What to Do Now

If you have read all of the information in this pack, discussed it with your partner and family and now feel fostering is for you. Please complete the enclosed fostering application form offer and return Shared Care Services (Fostering Division) in the envelope provided on the following address:

Shared Care Services (Fostering Division)
119 Eastern Avenue, Lower Ground Floor,
Redbridge
London IG4 5AN

One of our team members will contact you to undertake an initial visit. The social worker will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet. Should you be available during office hours, a visit is likely to be arranged quicker. The visit usually takes between 2/3 hours and this will provide you with another opportunity to gain more information and ask lots of questions. A decision to proceed with your application will be made shortly after this visit. Other sources of information about fostering:

www.baaf.org.uk

www.thefosteringnetwork.co.uk

If you care enough for a result, you will most certainly attend it.