



WellCare
FOSTERING SERVICES
Transforming young lives



INFORMATION BOOKLET

Becoming a foster carer

Could you change a child's future?



CALL
020 3417 9292

MOBILE & WHATSAPP
07877 507101

EMAIL
info@wellcarefostering.co.uk

ONLINE
[wellcarefostering.co.uk](https://www.wellcarefostering.co.uk)

Introduction

WellCare Fostering Services is a private independent fostering agency, established in April 2004 and registered under the Companies Act 1985.

WellCare's services comply with the requirements of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011, the National Minimum Standards for Fostering 2011, the Care Standards Act 2000, and the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

Foster families are needed when children and young people are not able to live with their parents or other family members. There are many reasons this can happen; examples include abuse, substance misuse or mental health issues.

Foster carers act as surrogate families for children and young people who become looked after. WellCare Fostering recruits, retains, assesses, supports and supervises foster carers to provide welcoming and nurturing families for children and young people.



OUR VISION

A family life that feels steady.

WellCare aims to recruit foster carers from different backgrounds to meet the diverse needs of children and young people looked after by the local authority.

Foster homes (also known as placements) need to reflect children's and young people's religious, cultural, racial and linguistic backgrounds. Our objective is to have foster homes that are nurturing and supportive, so that children and young people have a consistent and stable experience of family life.



HOW WE WORK

Child focused

WellCare recruits foster carers who will work with children and young people as individuals, meeting their needs in partnership with WellCare Fostering.

Foster carers will need to promote and enhance the potential of the children and young people they look after, as well as addressing any issues they may have experienced previously.

Being child focused, foster carers must be able to provide a safe and secure home and offer support, affection, concern and respect to the children and young people placed with them.

“

To achieve our goals of educating bold and ambitious children, we must invest in enriching, quality early child care and learning.

WHO YOU'LL CARE FOR

Children and young people

Placements are needed for children and young people aged **0 to 18**. Like foster carers, children and young people come from a variety of backgrounds, genders and abilities. Some children and young people may need to be placed with their brothers and sisters, so that they can stay together.

Categories of foster care

Every child's situation is different, so placements come in different shapes and lengths.

IMMEDIATE

Emergency

A placement usually needed immediately, in a crisis situation.

PLANNED BREAKS

Short break / respite

A short, time-specific placement to support a family.

HOURS TO 2 YEARS

Short-term

A placement needed for anything from a couple of hours up to two years.

BY THE COURT

Remand

Young people who are remanded by the court to live with foster carers.

UNTIL 18

Long-term

Placements for children who are permanently looked after, until the age of 18.



What you'll need

These are the essential requirements we expect prospective foster carers to have before they are considered for the assessment stage.

- ✓ A spare bedroom
- ✓ A basic level of literacy
- ✓ A satisfactory enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check
- ✓ A satisfactory medical report from your GP
- ✓ To adhere to a strict confidentiality code
- ✓ If living with a partner or spouse, the relationship should be healthy and stable
- ✓ Good communication skills
- ✓ A satisfactory community support network
- ✓ The ability to be flexible and accept changes with a positive mindset
- ✓ A non-judgemental attitude
- ✓ A commitment to attend training events and support groups, using them as a chance to develop your knowledge and skills
- ✓ To accept children and young people who are often emotionally hurt and may not be able to respond positively, or as expected, to you and your family
- ✓ A willingness to accompany and support a child or young person to therapy, contact sessions, hospital appointments and so on

Not sure?

**Talk it through with us
before you decide.**

Call 020 3417 9292 or WhatsApp
07877 507101.



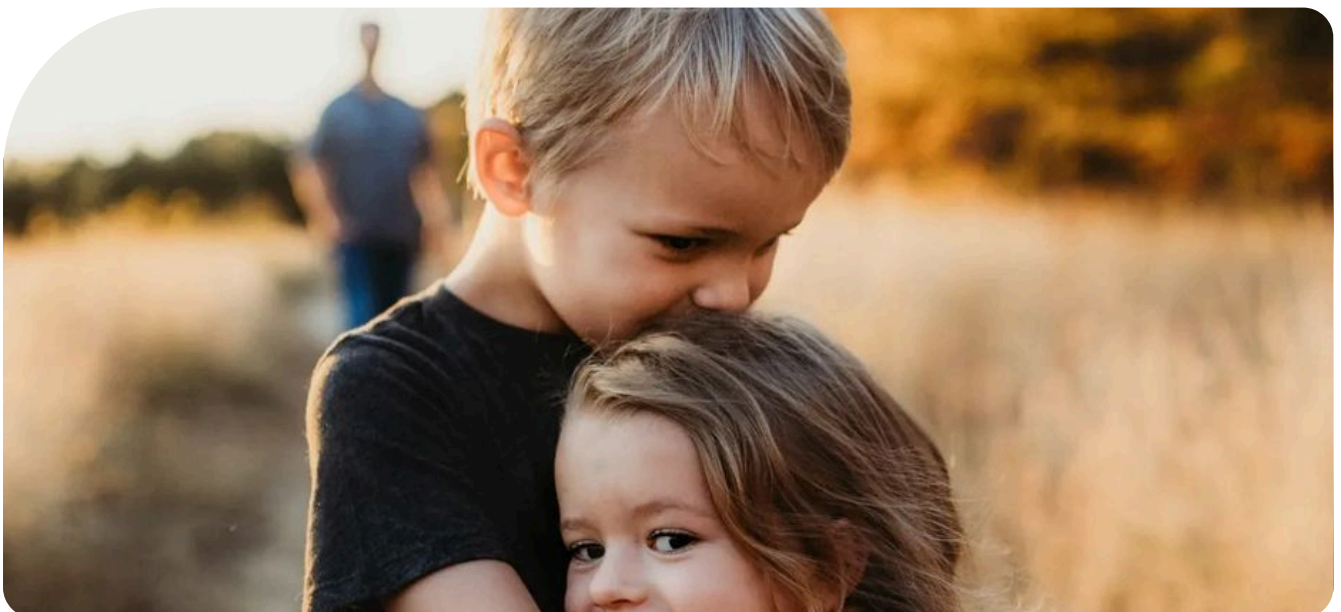
When it may not be the right time

People will not be considered for an assessment if:

- ✕ They are pregnant, have a child under one year old, or are undergoing fertility treatment
- ✕ They are experiencing serious financial problems
- ✕ They are planning to move house within the next six months
- ✕ They and their partner both work full time and both wish to continue to do so
- ✕ They have suffered a significant loss within their household over the last 12 months, such as separation or the death of a spouse or child
- ✕ They are a couple who have been in their present relationship for less than two years
- ✕ They have an issue with their immigration status
- ✕ Their accommodation is not permanent, such as a seasonal tenancy
- ✕ They have applied to adopt a child and are waiting for approval
- ✕ They, or any member of their household, have a serious criminal conviction
- ✕ They have a child of their own being looked after by the local authority



It is important that applicants are open and honest about their situation, so that the right course of action can be taken. Failure to disclose relevant information may invalidate an application.



WellCare selection criteria

Beyond the essentials, these are the qualities and experience that help us find the right families.

1 Applicants who understand children and young people's behaviour and are not judgemental

2 An ability to reflect on life experiences and learn from them

3 Applicants with experience of previous fostering, or close involvement with someone who has already fostered

4 Previous experience of caring for children, paid or unpaid

5 Applicants showing commitment to working towards meeting the care standards for fostering

6 Applicants with particular skills and experience in specific areas, such as learning difficulties, mental health problems or physical disability



Assessment and approval

A report (the **CoramBAAF Form F**) will be completed by the assessing social worker. The Form F is a descriptive report and a standard way of collecting, evidencing and presenting information about people who want to become foster carers, and their ability to carry out the tasks involved in fostering. The report is agreed and signed by the applicant, the social worker and the fostering manager.

Statutory checks

With your written consent, WellCare will make sure satisfactory clearance is received before the approval stage.

- ✓ Proof of identity
- ✓ Enhanced DBS check
- ✓ Local authority check
- ✓ Probation
- ✓ Previous applications to become a foster carer
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Ofsted
- ✓ NSPCC

References

- ✓ Three personal references
- ✓ Employer's reference (if applicable)
- ✓ Health visitor (if applicable)
- ✓ School (if applicable)

Additional checks may be needed depending on circumstances.

Medical report

You'll have a medical examination with your GP using the CoramBAAF medical form. The form is then reviewed by the agency's Medical Adviser.

Evidence and information for the assessment

A variety of techniques are used to gather evidence about an applicant's suitability to foster. These may include:

OBSERVATION AT HOME

RECORDS AND REPORTS

DISCUSSIONS

SKILLS TO FOSTER TRAINING

OTHER SETTINGS, E.G. THE WORKPLACE

Application **timeline**

4–6

months on average

The application and assessment process takes 4 to 6 months on average. Every effort is made to avoid unnecessary delay, and applicants are guided and supported throughout.

1

Telephone or personal enquiry

2

Initial details taken

3

Information pack provided to your family

4

Home visit arranged, initial interview held and form completed

5

DBS, probation and local authority checks made

6

Skills to Foster training

7

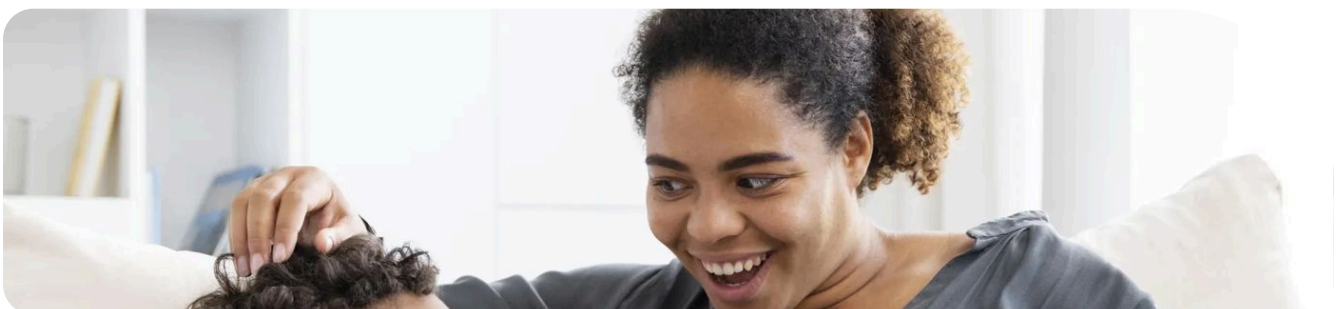
Assessment interviews; personal and work references taken

8

Completed Form F presented to WellCare's Fostering Panel

9

The Agency Decision Maker makes a decision on approval



Approval as a foster carer

The fostering panel's primary legal function is to make recommendations about the approval of foster carers.

01

To consider each application for approval, and recommend whether or not a person is suitable to act as a foster carer

02

Where it recommends approval, to recommend the terms on which approval is to be given

- ✓ The panel must consider an assessment report about the prospective foster carers.
- ✓ Copies of the completed CoramBAAF Form F are circulated to WellCare's Fostering Panel in advance of the meeting.
- ✓ The assessing social worker attends the Fostering Panel to present their report. Applicants are expected to attend too.
- ✓ The panel will discuss every aspect of the application.
- ✓ Once satisfied it has the information it needs, the panel makes a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker about the applicant's approval.
- ✓ Applicants are told the panel's recommendation on the day.
- ✓ The Agency Decision Maker will inform applicants of their decision within 7 days.



Your first year

Approved foster carers sign the foster carer's agreement and receive other information to begin their fostering career.

Approved carers complete the one-year induction workbook known as the **Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD)**. This is compulsory, and the agency will help you complete it. Seven standards are covered over the first year:

STANDARD 1

Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people

STANDARD 2

Understand your role as a foster carer

STANDARD 3

Understand health and safety, and healthy care

STANDARD 4

Know how to communicate effectively

STANDARD 5

Understand the development of children and young people

STANDARD 6

Keep children and young people safe from harm

STANDARD 7

Develop yourself

The training is designed to give foster carers the skills and knowledge to foster safely and competently. Ongoing training is provided throughout.

After completing TSD, foster carers attend a minimum of 3 training sessions a year.

Meeting the outcomes

Five outcomes guide everything we and our foster carers do for children and young people.

1

Being healthy

- Encouraging children to find physical activities they can all access and enjoy
- Encouraging them to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables each day
- Giving information in the Foster Carers' Handbook and leaflets

2

Staying safe

- Recruiting and sustaining suitable foster carers
- Never permitting physical punishment in any circumstances
- Making sure children and young people know how to complain, and continuously seeking their views
- Making sure foster carers have up-to-date health and safety inspections
- Making sure foster carers have household policies and safe care plans
- Making sure foster carers have First Aid, Safe Caring and Child Protection training
- Providing support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from qualified social workers



3

Enjoying and achieving

- Reinforcing the importance of education
- Supporting, and having high expectations of, school attendance
- Encouraging children and young people to take part in extra activities at school
- Celebrating children's and young people's achievements

4

Making a positive contribution

- Helping foster children and young people contribute to their foster carers' annual review
- Helping birth children and young people contribute to their parents' annual foster carer review
- Encouraging children and young people to have their say, verbally and in writing

5

Achieving economic well-being

- Helping children and young people save some of their pocket money, as well as a dedicated amount saved on their behalf by their foster carer
- Supporting foster carers to open a bank account for the child (if possible)
- Helping foster carers support young people to budget in preparation for independence



Foster carers' support

There are various sources of support available to foster carers. The most important is your **allocated supervising social worker**, who will meet you regularly to talk through any concerns. Monthly supervision sessions cover training needs and development, as well as your needs and those of the placement.

WellCare Fostering Services provides membership of **The Fostering Network** for all our foster carers. We also provide:

24/7 support

Specialist training

Competitive allowances

Foster Carers' Handbook

No reduction in allowance for siblings or long-term placements

Festival and holiday allowance

FOSTERING ALLOWANCE

Allowances are paid fortnightly in arrears. There are set amounts for pocket money, savings and clothing. The allowance also covers household costs, for example:

UPKEEP OF THE HOME

WEAR AND TEAR

GAS, ELECTRICITY AND WATER

TELEPHONE LINE

HOSPITALITY

Our commitment

WellCare Fostering Services is committed to working with foster carers to provide every opportunity for the children and young people in our care.

Our aim is that children and young people achieve their potential in good health, education, money management, positive personal relationships and productive use of their free time.

Become a foster carer, help us make a difference

Your questions

Use this page to note down any questions you'd like to ask the social worker at their first visit to your home.



WellCare
FOSTERING SERVICES
Transforming young lives

Ready to take the first step?

Together, we can transform young lives.

Start with a conversation. There's no commitment, and no question is too small.

CALL

020 3417 9292

MOBILE & WHATSAPP

07877 507101

EMAIL

info@wellcarefostering.co.uk

VISIT

wellcarefostering.co.uk

504 Olympic House, 28-42 Clements Road, Ilford IG1 1BA



**The
Fostering
Network**

MEMBER
NAFP
NATIONWIDE ASSOCIATION
OF FOSTERING PROVIDERS

WellCare Fostering Services Ltd
Company No. 04963908 · Ofsted URN SC061984