



## Did you know?

Today's bulletin aims to provide you with more information about what being a foster carer could actually look like. It aims to break down any stereotypes or ideas you may have about fostering, and give you a clearer idea of the type of people we hope to attract to asphaleia. Don't forget, if you have any questions about becoming a carer with asphaleia, or know someone who might be interested, please do contact me further and we can have a chat.

- ✓ You can be a foster carer if:
  - You are single
  - You work
  - You rent your home
  - You have one or more spare bedrooms
  - You are in a same sex relationship
  - You are over 21
  - You are retired
  - You have no experience of working with children
  - You have your own family
  - You are divorced
  - You would prefer to only foster babies
  
- ✓ At asphaleia you can receive an allowance for the care and accommodation of a young person of over £300 per week while in placement.
  
- ✓ Fostering is often a temporary arrangement, and many fostered children return to their own families. Children who cannot return home but still want to stay in touch with their own families often live in long-term foster care.
  
- ✓ Key qualities of foster carers include being a great listener, having a good sense of humour, being optimistic, having their feet firmly on the ground and showing resilience. They must also be able to offer the time, commitment, space and skills to care for children separated from their families.
  
- ✓ All foster carers receive training before being approved.
  
- ✓ You do not need any formal qualifications to be a foster carer.
  
- ✓ There are a range of fostering placement options you could provide. These include:
  - **Emergency:** Emergency foster carers will need to be prepared to take a child into their home at any time of the night or day and have them stay for a few days. This type of fostering is used at short notice. For example, if a lone parent is taken into hospital and there is no one to care for their child. Longer-term plans must then be considered.
  - **Short-term:** This can mean anything from an overnight stay to a period of several months. Short-term foster carers provide a temporary place to stay until the child can return home to their own family or a longer-term fostering placement or adoption arrangement can be made.
  - **Long-term:** Sometimes children will not be able to go back to live with their own families for a number of years, if at all. Long-term fostering allows children and young people to stay in a family where they can feel

secure, while maintaining contact with their birth family. There is a particular need for this type of foster care at the moment.

- **Leaving care and supported lodgings:** Some foster carers specialise in helping young people prepare to live independently. Foster carers will need to help these young people develop self-confidence along with life skills, such as looking after their own health, budgeting, completing domestic tasks and managing social relationships.
- **Short-break:** Also known as 'shared care', this covers a variety of different types of part-time care. You might have a child to stay for anything from a few hours each week to a couple of weekends each month, giving their own family or their full time foster carers a break.
- **Parent and baby:** Specially trained foster carers will take both young parents and their babies into their home, providing them with care and support and teaching them how to care for their baby.

### **Below are two fostering stories, from across the UK**

#### **Colin and Carol**

Colin and Carol got into fostering through helping young people in their community. Together they foster teenagers:

"The first foster child that we took in said afterwards that when his life was out of control somebody took control of it. Obviously with the intent to give it back to him when he could manage it. I think it was important that somebody was bigger than he was at that time.

"Our aim is to get young people in our care to be confident and comfortable with who they are. It's an exciting, challenging, rewarding, difficult job - but then what job isn't if you want to do it well?"

#### **Shaun**

Shaun is a boxing instructor who decided to become a foster carer after working with children at a local residential home. He has been fostering for six years:

"As a foster carer, I've been able to develop my skills and abilities, to be open and honest and to analyse myself.

"Foster carers need loads of different skills. Every day I'm reasoning and negotiating with the young people as well as the other professionals in the team.

"Fostering is a career that you live every minute of the day. But it's also a lot of fun, and for me it's like reliving my childhood."

If you have any more questions about any of the above, please do contact Hayley further.

#### **Quiz question 8**

- a. How many people went to Chessington on Saturday?
- b. Name three rides that some of the children went on?
- c. What was the only ride that foster carer Lou went on?