

Spotlight on fostering teenagers



Fostering fact: There are almost 6,000 more children in care on any one day than in 2007, *The Fostering Network 2011*

The national picture

Teenagers are being hit hardest by the shortage of suitable foster carers across the UK, the Fostering Network has warned.

A new survey of 128 fostering services found that finding foster families for teenagers is now their top priority. Virtually all (98%) have a current shortage of foster families for teenagers, and four out of five need more foster carers for 11 to 15-year-olds than any other age group.

Moreover, over half (52%) reported that the pressure to find foster carers for teenagers is even worse than last year.

With babies and young children being prioritised when foster families are available, local authorities are not always able to find the ideal family for teenagers. Too many have

to live with foster carers a long way from home, move too frequently and change schools at a crucial time in their education. Some will be living in residential care when foster care has been identified as their best option.

Around two-fifths of children in care in the UK are aged 11 to 15. This has always been one of the most difficult age groups to find homes for, but these figures show that the situation is getting worse and there is even more pressure now to find people with the right skills to care for teenagers.

The asphaleia picture

We currently have seven teenagers in our care and we have four foster families who specifically foster 11-15 year olds. Teenagers in our care have placement breakdown history - they have often been moved many times before and

can arrive with a preconceived negative attitude towards their new home, and the chance they have of staying for a long time & building relationships.

In addition to these issues, attendance at school can be low, and peer influences and labels can have a damaging effect on their well-being and self image.

We feel it is such a privilege to take care of teenagers. You are part of key decisions that can shape their future and the person they are going to be - will they go to college? What career will they train in? What friends will they make along the way?

It's an exciting, and challenging, time to be a part of a young person's life. We are proud of all our carers who take on the role of caring for these vulnerable young people.

Quiz question 2:

- Who is the famous author who is supporting foster care fortnight 2011?
- Name one of her books.

Fostering teenagers: spotlight on carers, Khosrow and Phillippa

Khosrow and Phillippa were first approved with asphaleia on 22nd April 2009. They received their first teenager on the same day they were approved and he has remained with them ever since. They have fostered a further six teenagers in their second vacancy.

Khosrow and Phillippa are very skilled in working with young people and love to spend time together as a family. They prefer to foster teenagers and will welcome any foster child aged 11-18 years old into their family.

"If there were awards for excellent service, Phillippa and Khosrow would truthfully be one of the carers I would pick, I rate them so highly"

Social Worker



To find out more about becoming a foster carer with asphaleia please contact the fostering team on 01903 236522 or visit our website <http://www.asphaleia.co.uk/ventures/fostering.html>