

Specialist Fostering



Professional opportunities.
Excellent financial allowances.
Use your skills to make a difference to
Leicestershire children and young people in care.



We're there to support them.
We are family. Join us!
Call 0116 305 05 05

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Leicestershire
**Fostering
& Adoption**

Introduction

Every carer who looks after a child in care is special, however our Specialist Carers provide an extra level of care to some of our most complex and traumatised young people.

Perhaps you have experience of working with children and young people who face real challenges in their lives, including being in care and having complex behavioural and / or emotional needs.

Many of our Specialist Carers say that in their previous roles, they wished they had been able to focus on just one child and given them their complete time, dedication and support in order to make a real difference to them.

This is your opportunity. Leicestershire County Council are giving some of our young people in care, the most holistic, professional and tailored care that they need and deserve.

We are looking for people who have experience, qualifications, the relevant skills and the determination to make a difference to a young person's life.

In return, you will:

- Receive a generous allowance in line with professional levels
- Be fully supported by our Dedicated Placement Support Team
- Receive bespoke ongoing professional developmental training
- Gain the opportunity to be part of a professional team, making critical differences to young lives and their futures.

“This is a dream job – I’m using my professional skills and experience, but also have access to so much support, that I can really improve and make things happen for my young person.”

Leicestershire County Council Specialist Carer

One2One



For some children and young people in our care, their needs are so complex that they require intensive and dedicated support that cannot be met in a typical fostering arrangement.

As a One2One Carer with Leicestershire County Council you will utilise your skills and experience to care for a young person in your home, providing dedicated care to enable them to reach their full potential in life.

This is no ordinary fostering arrangement but a full-time and well-paid professional role. You will have the chance to use and develop your social work skills or residential work experience in new and flexible ways to transform the life of a young person in care.

We realise that for some young people due to their experiences in life, their emotional state is such that they are not able to function in a busy household or a residential placement. They need intensive, considered and dedicated care, which is flexible to their needs and by a carer who is driven to achieve the best outcome for them and with them.

As a One2One Carer you will use positive reinforcement of pro-social behaviour, therapeutic parenting and other recognised methods to build a bright future for a young person with complex emotional and behavioural issues.

What we need from you:

- A spare bedroom for the sole use of fostering within your home.
- No children under the age of 18 living permanently in your home.
- Be available full-time, or willing to take this as your full-time role upon approval as a One2One Carer.
- Be able to drive and have access to a car.
- Be driven to strive, along with a professional team, to achieve the best outcomes for our young people.
- Have relevant experience or a professional background dealing with young people with challenging or difficult behaviours. This may include previous health and social care, youth work or teaching roles.
- Be willing to care for a young person in your home and work as part of a multi-disciplinary team, with extensive support from Leicestershire County Council staff.

In return you will get regular and competitive pay from between £34,500 to £48,244 per annum, bespoke ongoing training and development, access to regular respite care and round the clock dedicated support from Leicestershire County Council.

One2One Carers are paid throughout the year - even at times when they are in between placements and do not have a young person living with them. They will be expected to take part in training and provide support to other Specialist Carers during these times.

If you live in Leicestershire or close to our borders and are interested in being part of a dedicated, knowledgeable and passionate team delivering a better future for young people one child at a time then our team is ready and waiting to tell you more and answer your questions.

This is a role that changes futures – including yours.

Please get in touch to find out if this could be the next step for you.

Case study

Lee - One2One Foster Carer

Before becoming a foster carer I had worked in education, supporting teenagers with their employability skills. I've also worked in residential care - which really helped to develop my skills and confidence in working with young people. My partner Aimee also had experience with teenagers as she worked in a college.

I could see the difference that fostering makes to the lives of children in care, so we went along to an information evening at County Hall. We spoke to current foster carers about what to expect and their experiences. After lots of discussion, Aimee and I decided that we felt we could provide a nurturing environment for young people that came to live with us and we started our fostering journey.

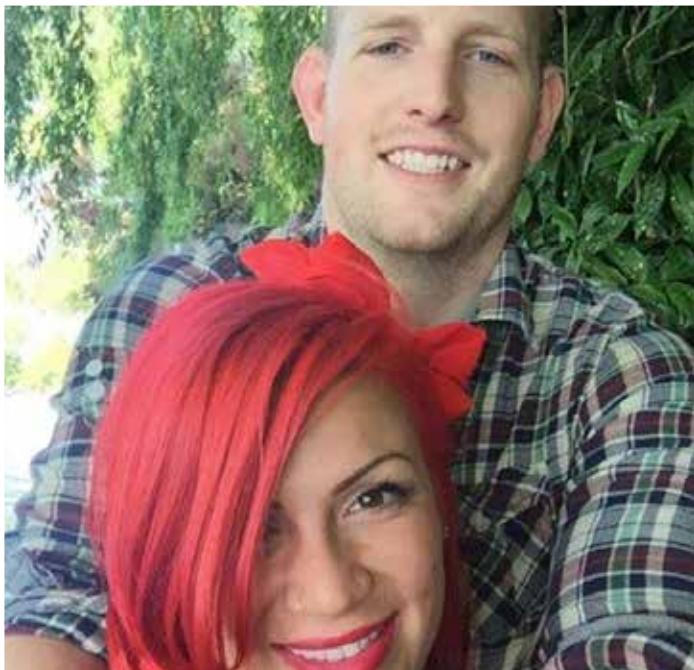
Over the last two years, we've had many highs and lows - probably what I'd have expected, working closely with young people with complex needs - but ultimately our experience has been positive. This is helped by the support we receive from the county council's Dedicated Placement Support Team. We're supported before a young person moves in and given guidance to ensure the best possible outcomes for both them and ourselves.

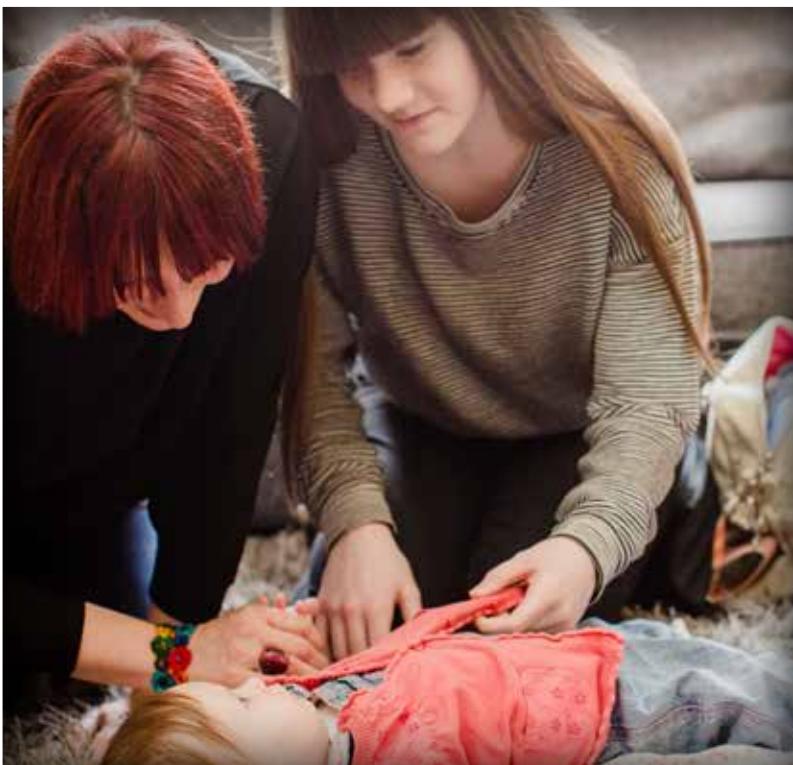
When a child is with us, we have regular supervision to discuss any problems, big or small and the young person can also have visits from a support worker. This is really beneficial for the child or young person.

Our opinions and concerns are taken seriously and we're treated as professionals and very much a fundamental part of the team. The role of a Specialist Foster Carer is demanding but the financial allowances reflect our experience and the hard work that's required. We are also given respite when required and are entitled to four weeks of paid respite leave per year - time to recharge our batteries!

I'd encourage anyone who's thinking about Specialist Fostering to explore the idea - it was a fantastic decision for us. Even if you've never considered fostering, but enjoy working with young people, you could make a positive difference to young people's lives - and the chances are they'll have a positive impact on your life too.

“I'd encourage anyone who's thinking about Specialist Fostering to explore the idea - it was a fantastic decision for us. **”**





Parent and Child

Sometimes, in order to decide if it will be safe for a parent to care for their child independently, a Parent and Child placement is required. Often, this can be a young parent and their child.

The parent will need your guidance, skills and experience to get through an emotional time in their lives and to ensure they are able to look after their child. You will care for, support and empower them to develop their confidence, parenting skills and to make positive decisions about their child's wellbeing.

Leicestershire County Council's Parent and Child Carers receive £660 per week (tax-free) as well as complete support, training and guidance from our Dedicated Placement Support Team.

What we need from you:

- Be at home full-time or be able to do this once approved.
- Have a spare bedroom, for the sole use of fostering.
- Have relevant experience and skills to support and care for a parent and their child during a 12 week placement with you.
- Have no children under school age living in your home.

Your ability to empathise and guide a parent during a difficult and potentially life-changing time in their life will be needed, along with the confidence to work with the fostering team to ensure the wellbeing of the child in your care.

You will receive:

- £660 a week tax-free for this hugely rewarding role.
- Specialist training, ongoing support and peer support groups to guide you in your role.
- Full assistance from a dedicated team, with a 24/7 telephone support line.
- Regular support visits from social workers, health visitors and other professionals, where you will be part of a team of professionals.

This is a unique fostering opportunity for people who have the relevant skills and experience to provide a nurturing, safe and life-changing support to a parent and child in your home.

If you think you have the relevant skills, life experience, meet the requirements above then please get in touch with the team. We would love to hear from you and can talk in more detail about this amazing opportunity.

Parent and Child Carers – making life-changing differences to lives – including yours.

Case study

Jackie - Parent and Child Foster Carer

Before becoming a Parent and Child Foster Carer with Leicestershire County Council, I worked in the NHS as a nurse, midwife and health visitor. When I finally retired, my husband and I decided to foster children. In our second year of fostering we decided to try providing Parent and Child specialist placements; we both felt we had a lot of experience, knowledge and skills that could be used to support this role. Leicestershire County Council's fostering service provided us with a foster carer mentor who was experienced in Parent and Child placements, we also benefited from attending a specialist support group with other Parent and Child Carers who were great at sharing their own experiences.

There are so many types of Parent and Child placements, some are young teenage mothers who need a nurturing home to help them learn parenting skills to support their new baby. Other types of Parent and Child placements may be with older parent(s), whose previous child(ren) may no longer be in their care; a court is now asking for a new assessment of their parenting abilities because their situation has changed and they have made positive life changes.

It is a very rewarding area of Specialist Fostering; something that we are both proud to have supported. We have received excellent support from the children's social workers and supervising social workers...ours has been brilliant! Initially this type of fostering does require the foster carer to provide a high degree of supervision and support; but if good progress is made, this will become more relaxed. It is so important to build a trusting relationship between yourself and the parent(s); as you will need to provide regular feedback, and encouragement during their time with you. Our fostering records have helped the professionals and the court to make the right decision for the child's future.

We have seen the difference this type of fostering can make to people's lives – sometimes parents just need a helping hand...at a critical point in their lives to move forward. You could be that special person who can make a positive difference too. If you are interested please ring the fostering team to have a chat, you won't regret it.



“ Sometimes parents just need a helping hand...at a critical point in their lives to move forward ”



Pathway Carers

As a Pathway Carer, you will be supporting young people in care on their transition from residential care to prepare for independent living.

Our Pathway Carers, along with our Dedicated Placement Support Team will enable a young person to move from a residential setting and learn to adjust and find their place in the community.

The young people on this scheme may have experienced several placement breakdowns and will be in need of support to help them achieve their potential. You can be their role model, their guiding light at a critical time in their lives.

As a Pathway Carer, empathy is important and you should have the desire to empower young people. Many of the young people who need Pathway Carers have previously struggled in education and may need your guidance and support to consider their next steps in life.

You may support them to build relationships with their family and friends to enable them to develop an effective support network for their future. Therefore, your skills of working with young people and understanding the issues that they may face will be important. You will also support our young people to access services such as CAMHS (Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services), health appointments and educational support.

Some Pathway Carers look after more than one young person at a time, with guidance from our team. This would mean receiving further payment enhancements.

What we need from you:

- A spare bedroom available for the sole use of fostering.
- No children under the age of 10 years old living in the home (This will be considered on a case by case basis).
- Have relevant skills, qualifications and/or life experience to provide dedicated support which will be tailored to the needs of the young person.
- Able to drive and have access to a car.

In return our Pathway Carers receive:

- Payments range from between £34,788 to £36,764 per annum.
- Excellent ongoing bespoke specialist training and support.
- Ongoing support from our Dedicated Placement Support Team.
- Access to help and guidance 24/7.
- The opportunity to be part of a dynamic and creative team who work together to achieve the best outcomes for young people.

If you have experience of working with and / or caring for young people at a critical time in their lives, then we would love to hear from you. Get in touch with the Recruitment Team and we'll answer any questions you may have.

YOU could be the difference. Together, we can build positive futures.

Case study

Leanne - Pathway Carer

After working in Further Education for over 15 years, I succeeded in becoming a Senior Leader at an inner city school where there were really high rates of deprivation. This is where my understanding of and enjoyment of working with and supporting young people grew. In particular, I developed the ability to relate effectively with young people from a wide range of ethnic and social backgrounds.

I stepped away from the educational sector after reaching the position of Principal as I wanted a new life challenge. I wanted to continue to use my knowledge, skills, expertise and work from home. I wanted to make a difference to a young person's life, along with the option to earn a professional salary; we all need to earn a living, right! After much research and many meetings with the Specialist Team Manager, I became one of the first carers on the Specialist Pathway Team and it was the best career move I ever made! I'm treated like a professional because let's face it, I am a professional, but I now gain the best bonus ever... a family!

The most rewarding aspect of being a Pathway Carer is working with young people, changing their life chances and making a positive impact on their social mobility. Being the 'secure base' of a young person's life encourages them to aspire and believe they can achieve a positive, rewarding future; despite the turbulent backgrounds they may have come from. I've encountered many children and know how positive role models and the understanding that 'someone believes in you' can make a huge impact on how a young person can start to perceive themselves. Perceive their future.

If you have skills and expertise with working with vulnerable children and can offer an environment to help calm and develop a young mind, this could be your next career move. I would urge you to get in touch with the Recruitment Team, they'll help you to decide if this is the right role for you.

“ Positive role models and the understanding that ‘someone believes in you’ can make a huge impact on how a young person can start to perceive themselves. ”





One2One EBD

(Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties)

We look after children and young people from Leicestershire with a wide variety of needs.

However, some of our children and young people have additional and sometimes challenging behaviours that mean they need specialist care. This is where our One2One EBD Foster Carers make the difference.

Some of our young people have complex and challenging behaviours, due to behavioural difficulties and learning disabilities. This is where you come in.

If you have experience of working with, caring for or supporting children and young people who have additional and complex needs, then we would love to hear from you. As with our mainstream One2One Carers, you will be caring for one young person. This will be a focused and dedicated role with the aim to settle, secure and motivate our young person to ensure their needs are met on all levels. You will be their advocate. You will be their carer. Above all, with our support, you will be part of building their present and their future.

Children and young people supported by our One2One (EBD) Carers may have a physical disability, a severe learning disability, a severe sensory impairment, Autism or complex health needs. If you have experience of caring for or working with young people with any of these conditions and would like to join our team as a specialist carer, then we would love to hear from you.

What we need from you:

- A spare bedroom for the sole use of fostering within your home.
- No children under the age of 18 living permanently in your home.
- Be available full-time, or willing to take this as your full-time role upon approval as a One2One Carer.
- Be able to drive and have access to a car.
- Be driven to strive, along with a professional team, to achieve the best outcomes for our young people.
- Have relevant experience or a professional background dealing with young people with challenging or difficult behaviours. This may include previous health and social care, youth work or teaching roles.
- Be willing to care for a young person in your home and work as part of a multi-disciplinary team, with extensive support from Leicestershire County Council staff.

As with all of our Specialist Foster Carer roles, this is an incredible opportunity for people with the skills, determination and knowledge to care for some of our most vulnerable children and young people as part of a team of professionals.

Case study

Paul and Marie - One2One (EBD) carers

Our journey to become foster carers began with Marie babysitting on behalf of another foster carer, looking after their disabled child. Marie found this a very rewarding task due to her prior experience with working with children in a nursery. The foster carer she baby sat for said "Why don't you think about becoming a foster carer?". After a lot of thought from both of us and a discussion with the whole family, we began the process. Our children were very supportive too and welcoming of the new journey in life we were embarking upon, together, as a family.

We had a few placements, of children, from an independent fostering agency then a long spell without any placements. Until we got a referral for siblings, who were both disabled and had specialised needs.

The true journey had begun, it was very long but was blessed with little achievements, step by step. However, it did also provide new challenges and set-backs. Such as, one of the children developing epilepsy due to his condition.

The children's social worker also provided fantastic support and went above and beyond to further support and acknowledge what we were dealing with.

It became clear after some time, however, the independent fostering agency didn't give us the support the county council could provide. So it made sense for us to transfer to Leicestershire County Council as One2One (EBD) Carers - and we haven't looked back since.



A day in the life:

Our day starts around 4:30am and sometimes earlier if we have to deal with any surprises, such as smearing or fits. But these issues are becoming less and less. The day is relatively normal during school terms and they are much like any other child. But we do have to give support all the time.

A typical weekend is also an early start, 4:30am again. Beginning with breakfast and then getting dressed. Then taking a trip to the village where the children are now familiar with everyone in the shops and all the shop workers also know them. First, we visit the bank and then to the travel agents to pop in to say "Hello!". Then to the sweet shop to let the children pick their own sweets and treats. Then a little visit to Greggs for a break.

It's off to home after this to let the children eat their lunch. Followed by an hour at our local park. Or to a play centre and even sometimes just relaxing in the garden, eating our afternoon snacks. After this it's time on the Kindles and then dinner time. Followed by calming down for the evening as its an early start in the morning. Then bed time for everyone at 6pm or 6:30pm, to do it all over again the next day.

We are a bigger family now due to the children, as they are a permanent placement. We can't imagine not having them and now see how far they have come. Issues are always going to be there but now Paul is a full-time carer it makes everything so much easier.

Our ethos:

"If they are in our house they are in our family"

Sometimes you can't see how far the children have come until you look back. From when they were taking food without asking during outings for dinner to now, when they are the best-behaved children in the room. Or seeing their faces as we walked around Disney watching them running up to characters and hugging them, the same as all of the other excited children. Since becoming One2One (EBD) carers we focus everything on the children. Everything else, is taken care of by the fostering team at Leicestershire County Council. It's the best move we ever made.

Training and Support



We believe that professional training and support is personal - personal to you, your current skills and experience (along with meeting the needs of your role at that time). We will encourage and support you to develop and enhance your skills throughout your career with us.

Leicestershire County Council will support you as a foster carer across the following areas:

- Practical and emotional support from your own supervising social worker with regular fortnightly face to face visits and telephone support through the foster carer support line.
- If visits or support are needed in between regular visits, this will be offered by the supervising social worker who is there to support you every step of the way.
- Working with multiple agencies and partners (such as Educational Psychologists, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the Early Help Services) through the delivery of care planning.
- Our Virtual School will provide our foster carers with tips and strategies to help children in their care to get the most out of school and further education.

Specialised training tailored to support you in meeting the child or young person's needs.

Practical and emotional support to enhance your role and encourage further development.

The 'Virtual School' is a Leicestershire County Council service whose role is to improve the education of Leicestershire's children in care by supporting schools, foster carers and social workers to help children and young people to do their best.



As members of The Fostering Network we are part of an organisation that strives to improve policy and legislation for foster carers and children in care. Our membership provides our foster carers with access to lots of benefits, information and support too.

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Strong and happy LGBT adoptive & foster families throughout the UK

Payments, allowances and further professional development

We know that the best carers are not motivated to look after children and young people because of the money they can earn.

However, we also know that we need the best people, with the skills, qualifications, experience and dedication to provide some of our children and young people in care, with the best opportunities in life.



Therefore, we are offering professional fees for professional carers. We believe that our children and young people deserve the best care, which is why we are looking for Specialist Carers to join our team. Here is some further information about the specific roles, the payments you will receive and other information for you to consider:

One2One (mainstream) and One2One (Complex EBD)

These carers will be paid every four weeks, regardless of whether or not they have a child in placement. When a child is in placement, you will also receive the fostering allowance for that child, based on their age and needs.

You will be entitled to respite care, to give you regular breaks, complete support from our 'Dedicated Placement Support Team' as well as our access to our support line 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

All carers will have their own social worker who will support them. Ensuring you have all you need and make sure you have access to training and development along the way. All of our carers will be invited to regular 'thank you' events where they can all get together. Our Specialist Carers also provide respite and support to each other.

You will be part of our multi-disciplinary team, looking to find the best way to care for a child and ensuring that their needs are at the centre of all decisions made. You will have ongoing support and guidance as well as receiving bespoke and considered training and development.

One2One / One2One EBD: From £34,500 to £48,224 per year

One2One Carers can't have any children under 18 years living in their home.

“ The training was so helpful. No classrooms or essays, it just helped me to make sense of and really understand what would be involved in my role. **”**

Leicestershire County Council Specialist Carer

Pathway Carers

From £34,788 to £36,764 per year

There is the potential to have two young people in placement for Pathway Carers, dependent on individual circumstances.

Our Pathway Carers welcome a young person between 10 – 18 years into their family home forming a trusting and valuable relationship even if only for a short time. If appropriate, Pathway Carers can look after two young people, in their home, at the same time.

Pathway Carers will have good communication skills and an ability to work with a range of professionals and organisations.

Pathway Carers will be able to create a stable, safe and supportive environment for a young person. Providing the aspiration and encouragement to fulfil their full potential. Setting ground rules, creating behavioural boundaries and enforcing them, building positive behaviours.

The application process

To become approved as a Specialist Carer you will need to be assessed as a foster carer. This process takes between 4-6 months and you can remain in your current employment if necessary, during that time. We will be flexible and supportive to enable you to make plans, learn more and make a considered transition to fostering.

Throughout the assessment process, you will be invited to training, which will further enhance and support your skills and provide an opportunity to meet other carers. Some Specialist Carers remain in their employment throughout the assessment process, but will then leave and fully dedicate themselves to the role.

Stage one of the process is where the checks and references are gathered. Stage two of the process is where you will be allocated your own social worker who will visit you at home to understand you, your skills and how best you may be suited to the role. We run these stages together and during this time, you will attend training to prepare you for the role and continue to receive bespoke training and ongoing development after approval as a Pathway Carer.

Panel

At the end of this process, you will attend our Panel where a recommendation will be made to approve you as a Specialist Carer with Leicestershire County Council.

What next?

You may currently be in employment and considering a change. You may be looking for a new opportunity, one where you can use your skills to make a real difference. Whatever stage you are at in thinking about the Specialist Carer roles with Leicestershire County Council, then the Recruitment Team are here to help.

Call 0116 305 05 05 or email fostering@leics.gov.uk

We can answer your questions, provide further information and arrange for you to talk to one of our carers so you can find out what it's really like.

We can arrange to visit you at home to discuss the roles in more detail.

There is no pressure to progress, just a willingness to help you to decide if this is the next step for you.

So, call us, email us, get in touch, we would love to hear from you.

“ From where Jason was when he first came to us, to where he is now, it’s almost unbelievable. It was simply down to dedication, the support we got from the team and never giving up on him. ”

Further links and information:



Fostering Network finances page

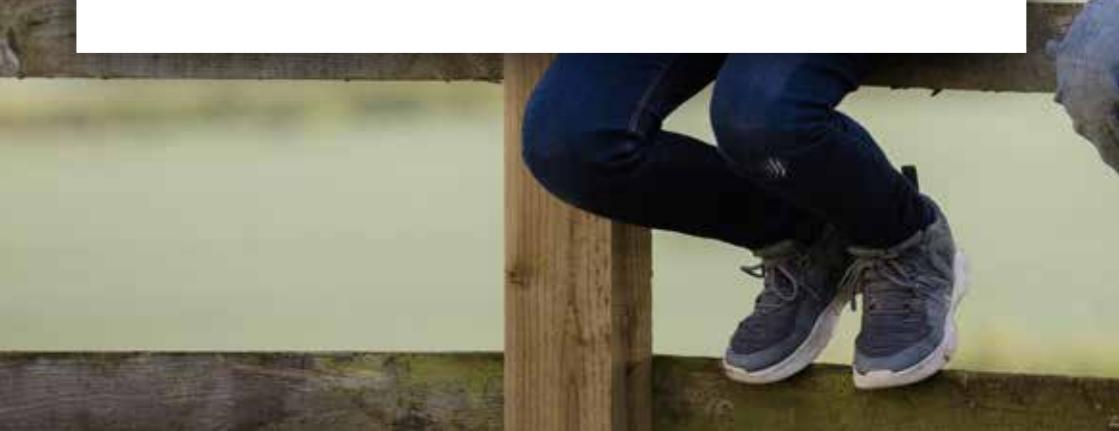


Gov.UK Self Assessment helpsheet documents



Gov.UK benefits while fostering





Leicestershire
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FosteringLeicestershire.com