

WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY



we
LOVE
our
**FOSTER
CARERS**

Fostering with Leicestershire County Council means you'll be part of our fostering family, with access to all the services and support that we offer.

WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

There are an increasing number of approved foster carers coming to join us here at Leicestershire and we are delighted! If you are thinking about joining us, let us explain some of the differences, the benefits and why joining us will make a difference to you, your family and the children and young people of Leicestershire.

At Leicestershire, we are one family. A 'family' of local services, built around our foster carers and children to ensure they all receive the support and care they deserve. We all work together, and the difference is amazing.

Regular and reliable

Many carers join us not because they are unhappy with the support they receive with their current provider, but mainly due to the low numbers of children that are placed with them. We prioritise placing Leicestershire's children in care, with our own approved carers, as this means we can offer stability for the child and the reliability of consistent placements for our carers. So, our carers enjoy regular placements of young people, meaning they receive payments and allowances that they can rely on.

Staying Local

Here at Leicestershire, we take care of Leicestershire's children. This means that our carers take care of local children, so you will only be travelling within the county area for school drop offs or contact when fostering our children and young people.

“ We offer all the support we can to our carers. It's important that we get to know what works for each family and how best we can ensure they remain happy, supported and enjoying their role as foster carers with us. ”

**Heather Hughes,
Team Manager, Team Around the Child**

“ Our carers are the life-blood of what we do. It is vital that we continue to support, nurture, appreciate and celebrate all of our carers. They are looking after the most vulnerable children and young people of Leicestershire. Our Team Around the Child (TAC) team are also there as the Team Around the Carer too. We take care of you to help you take care of ours ”

Joss Longman, Service Manager, Fostering Service

Support

Our foster carers have their own, dedicated supporting social worker, who will regularly be in touch and available to you. We also have an experienced, well established and knowledgeable team here at County Hall who work 365 days a year, supporting our foster carers and each other to look after our children.

You'll know that fostering can have its challenges but if things get tough, our 'Dedicated Placement Support Team' are at the other end of the phone for when extra help and advice is needed. This team is like our 'super hero' service.

They offer exceptional and flexible support to maintain and stabilise placements during the difficult times and also run regular events, offering opportunities to get together for children and adults.



Virtual School

Leicestershire County Council's Virtual School service is there for every looked-after child and they will work as part of the team around you and the child(ren) in your care. This means that you have a whole team to support you to get the best out of education for our young person.

Peer support

Peer support is invaluable and our local support groups, run by our foster carers, are based all around the county, so there's always someone close by who understands. Joining is not mandatory, but they are there if you would like to connect.



Mentoring

Many of our lovely foster carers offer support to new foster carers in the form of a 'buddy system'. Buddies will support new carers through their assessment process and the early days of approval and placement. Valuable, resourceful and often life-long friendships are made here.

Regular updates

The fostering service produce a regular newsletter full of updates, ideas, useful information, important contact details and personal messages. This is sent out to all our foster carers. We share good news stories, top tips and important information as well as some insights into staff members' hobbies and interests to help you get to know the people you might encounter during your journey.

Portal

Our foster carer's portal means that you have all the information you need at the tip of your fingers, 24 hours a day. You can also enter your daily logs, meaning easy access and immediate support when needed.

Social media

We also support our foster carers on social media. If you transfer to Leicestershire County Council, you'll be invited to join our private Facebook group where you can get advice, ideas and information from other foster carers and members of our fostering team.

As full members of both The Fostering Network and New Family Social, you'll have access to their wealth of support and information too.



Appreciation of our Fostering families

We love our fostering families. It's as simple as that. And we hold regular events for our carers and birth children, including an annual Carer's Celebration Event to show our gratitude for everything they do.

Other events include craft days, picnics and further celebration evenings to support fostering families, children in care and birth children. These events are a great opportunity to meet other foster carers and form those peer support networks we've mentioned above. We celebrate Sons & Daughters month with exciting events, as well as all year round support.

Training

Training and support are vital for our carers and at Leicestershire, we offer first-class opportunities. Extensive and ongoing training takes place throughout the year and this can be accessed online or at local venues. So there's no chance you'll have to travel long distances to a regional office in another county.

Training is also a great opportunity to meet up with each other as you will be alongside your fellow

Leicestershire carers.

Our courses are flexible and together with your supervising social worker, we can work to create a bespoke training package that will continue to develop and enhance your skills and enjoyment of fostering.



“ When we looked at everything, it was the belief that the overall benefits, regularity and stability of placements over time make fostering with LCC beneficial to us and the children too. In the longer-term, we are better off in so many ways. ”

Jane & Phil, previous independent fostering agency carers, now part of Leicestershire's fostering family

Respite

At Leicestershire we have built a 'peer to peer' type of respite. This was developed as a result of understanding the needs of our foster carers and also of our children in care. It enables valuable relationships to be built and nurtured, meaning that in the event of respite being needed, there is a considered and manageable support network available to all. Respite at Leicestershire is offered on an individual basis with the guidance of our Team Around the Child (TAC).

Foster carer rewards

How often do you tell people about fostering and the life changing difference it makes to you and the children you've cared for? We run a gift voucher rewards scheme for our carers who refer a friend to foster with us. You'll also have the opportunity to take part in recruitment activities and events and share your experiences and achievements with potential foster carers.

Additional allowances for our carers

Clothing Allowances

In cases where children or young people arrive in an emergency with no clothing, or inadequate clothing, a payment of up to £150 for each child can be made direct to the foster carer.

School Uniform Allowance

The department provides additional help with school uniform when:

- Starting primary school (grant of £105)
- Changing school (grant dependent on what the child needs for the new school)
- Starting secondary education (grant of £155)

Birthday Allowance

Birthday Allowance is equal to one week's Fostering Allowance and is paid automatically just before the child's birthday for gifts and celebrations.

Festival Allowance

Festival Allowance is equal to one week's Fostering Allowance and is paid automatically at the beginning of December, or before another major religious festival on request.

Holiday Allowance

Age-related and are based on two weeks of the basic fostering allowance. Payments are claimed by foster carers at the appropriate time.


School Trips Abroad

Educational trips for children are important for their development and consideration should be given to a number of possible funding sources including pupil premiums, a child's Personal Education Allowance (PEA), corporate parenting team and fostering allowances that carers receive, including the holiday allowance.

What do our carers say?

Our carers currently rate us highly in terms of the care, support and empowerment that we offer to them and we believe this is also reflected in our children. Leicestershire is a 'fostering family' and as such, we support, celebrate and guide our carers to be the best.

Paul and Marie transferred to Leicestershire County Council from an IFA:

“ It became clear after some time, however, that  independent fostering agency didn't give us the support the county council could provide. So it made sense for us to transfer – and we haven't looked back since.

They added: Since becoming Leicestershire County Council carers, we focus everything on the children. Everything else is taken care of by the fostering team at the council. It's the best move we ever made. ”



Stephen also transferred to Leicestershire from an IFA:

“ The process to transfer was quick too. I was worried it would may take ages but they guided me through, at my own pace and with complete support. It's been great and the team are lovely too. ”

HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?

1. Get in touch

If you would like to find out about transferring to foster with us, get in touch for a confidential, no obligation enquiry. In line with the Foster Carers Transfer Protocol (2014) we will provide information about what we could offer to you should you join us. This also takes into account any children or young people already placed with you.

2. Tell us more

Let's talk about you, what you do and how you would like fostering to work for you and your family in the future

We will not contact or disclose any information about your enquiry to anybody. This is completely confidential between you and us. You will be under no pressure to progress and we will simply provide you an offer, in terms of what you could expect, should you transfer to us. The rest is up to you.

If you decide to join us, you will need to give Notice of Intention to resign to your current Agency and let us have a copy of that. Only at that point, will we make contact with your agency as part of your transfer process.

3. Our position

Once we have spoken further with you, we'll let you know our position and how we feel transferring to us could work, taking into account any children currently placed with you and allowing for any future placements.

4. We'll write to you

We will send you a 'comfort letter', to let you know what we can offer you should you decide you would like to join us.

5. Next steps...

After that, it's up to you. If you do decide to join us we will fast-track your application to get you approved with us as quickly as possible. We will also work with the placing authority of any child currently placed with you.

We hope you find this guide useful but please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. We understand this can be a worrying time and as such, we want to support you to make the right decision for you, children in your care and any future young people that may join you in the future.

“ I now feel settled. I'm confident I can foster for as long as I wish, with Leicestershire's support and training. I don't have to worry about business changes that often affected us when we were with the agency. It feels like we've come home. ”

Jan & Fizz

JOIN US

become part of Leicestershire's
fostering family

Call: **0116 305 05 05**

Email: **fostering@leics.gov.uk**

Website: **www.fosteringleicestershire.com**

Make a difference by fostering for Leicestershire

“ It took us about four months in total, which was good. Our girl is still with us, which was our first worry and we are happy we have transferred to Leicestershire. We now have two more young people with us, which is great! ”

Sam & Wesley

