

Information Guide



The magic of fostering.

Welcome to Fostering Barnsley!

We're excited that you're interested in finding out more about the magic of fostering with us. Thank you for taking this first step towards creating a stable and loving home for Barnsley's children and young people in care.

What You'll Find in This Guide

This information pack is designed to guide you through the fostering process with Fostering Barnsley. We want to answer any questions or concerns you might have. We also want to explain the different types of fostering, and outline how you can become a foster carer.

We hope this pack provides you with useful information. We want to give you confidence to progress in your journey to foster with us. Fostering is a rewarding and life-changing experience, not only for the children and young people in your care but also for you and your family.

Give us a call any time - we'd love to talk with you.

Inside, you'll find the following:

- ✿ Information about us
- ✿ What is fostering?
- ✿ What does a foster carer look like?
- ✿ Types of foster care
- ✿ Support on your doorstep
- ✿ Financial support
- ✿ Step-by-step guide to the application process
- ✿ Information if you're a foster carer looking to transfer to us
- ✿ Next steps - how to apply

Talk with us today

Phone:
01226 978 600

Email:
fsteringrecruitmentteam@barnsley.gov.uk

Website:
www.fosteringbarnsley.co.uk

*Lines are open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

About Us

Fostering Barnsley is a part of Barnsley Council, and we're proud to support children and young people in care in our community.

All of our children and young people across Barnsley deserve a loving home full of care and support. Our children and young people in care should be able to stay close to their family, friends, school and the community they know and love. This means they can have the same opportunities and life chances as every other child. The best way we can guarantee this is to rely on our inspirational fostering community in Barnsley to keep them here, where they want to be.

The magic of fostering

Our amazing foster carers are invaluable. Their everyday support is magical: thanks to our foster carers' help we see children and young people bloom and flourish. The more foster carers we can welcome to our fostering community, the more stable and loving homes we can create for Barnsley's children and young people in care.

Living our values

At Fostering Barnsley, we want to live our values. That's why we're proud to be:

- ✿ A Fostering Friendly employer. If you work for Barnsley Council, we will help you to manage your hours and flexibility so you can foster.
- ✿ A real community. We're home to over 130 fostering families, who help our children to flourish every day. We aim to provide a supportive network where carers can share experiences, support each other and share advice.
- ✿ Fostering services without the jargon. We might be 'corporate parents' to the children and young people in our care, but you'll rarely hear us use corporate jargon here. Our children and young people are exactly that- part of our family here at Fostering Barnsley.



What is Fostering?

Fostering involves providing a home for children and young people who cannot live with their birth families. This care can range from a few days to several years, depending on the child's needs. Foster carers offer stability, support, and love, helping children navigate challenging times in their lives.

Why Fostering Matters

Children and young people enter the foster care system for various reasons. This might be due to family issues such as illness,

substance misuse, or relationship problems, making it unsafe for them to stay at home. In many cases, children have experienced abuse or neglect and need a safe place to live. There are also emergency situations where children require immediate placement at short notice. Fostering offers these children a safe, nurturing environment where they can feel secure and valued. Your decision to foster can make such a profound difference.

Fostering can be the first step towards a child being able to bloom.



Who are our foster carers?

Barnsley is home to so many fostering families, and we're always looking to grow our community. We know that people often worry they're not the right fit for fostering, but there's no set mould for a foster carer!

We only ask that you meet some eligibility criteria in line with national minimum standards for fostering in the UK:

- ✿ You must be over 21 years old.
- ✿ You have a spare bedroom for a child or young person. If you don't have a spare room, you may be eligible to foster a baby aged 0-2 in your bedroom.
- ✿ You exhibit patience, understanding, and a commitment to supporting a child's development.

We welcome people of all ages, backgrounds and experiences to give children and young people a positive future in the right home for them. Whether you're single or in a relationship, have children or don't, identify as LGBTQIA+, work with children, or have just retired, we want to hear from you.



“For me there’s no one key strength that outweighs all others to being a foster carer and it’s definitely a journey of learning. Thankfully, we are a very diverse bunch of people and that is exactly what is needed, because that diversity also comes with the children that join our families.”

- Shirley, foster carer



Types of Fostering

Fostering looks different for the different care needs of our children and young people. You might be providing care for just a few nights, or caring for a young person until they're ready to leave home as an adult. There's a different type of foster care to suit everyone and they're all equally important to helping our children flourish.

Short-term fostering

Short-term foster care means that a child is cared for by a fostering family for a short period of time. It might be an overnight stay, or it could be up to two years.

Long-term fostering

Long-term foster carers open their homes for many years. If you choose to foster long term, the child would become a member of your family and live with you on an ongoing basis.



Staying at Home care

Care shouldn't have to stop when a young person turns 18. When a young person stays home with you, you're still offering valuable guidance and support as a foster carer. To help you, we offer 50% of your skill-based fee so you can continue to care. You could receive up to £187 per week to aid your Staying Home arrangements.

Respite care

Our respite carers offer sleepovers, which give essential respite to a birth family or another fostering family. This is often over an evening, a weekend, or a couple of weeks over the school holidays.

Parent and child fostering

Some young mums or dads have very limited support networks and find themselves unable to meet their baby's basic needs. Our foster carers help new parents learn how to care for their child, in a safe, supportive and welcoming home.

Emergency care

Sometimes, we urgently need foster care for a child or young person. Emergency foster carers play a crucial role in providing immediate support when a child needs it most.


Short breaks care

Our short breaks foster carers provide regular support for children with additional needs. This might look like caring for a child for a couple of nights every month, or a regular weekend arrangement. You could also help give a child a break away from their parents, for example helping them to get involved in social activities during weekends, holidays or after school.

Sibling groups

It's beneficial for brothers and sisters to stay together. Wherever possible we'll try to find carers who can foster more than one child.





“To see our kids flourish and thrive, knowing how much they’ve overcome is just amazing. There’s nothing quite like knowing that you’re really helping someone have a second chance.”

Ellen and Joe, fostering family



Contact our team today

Talk to our friendly team on 01226 978600 about how you can help children and young people, no matter their age. Alternatively, please email us on fosteringrecruitmentteam@barnsley.gov.uk to arrange a callback.

visit www.fosteringbarnsley.co.uk

Support on Your Doorstep

At Fostering Barnsley, the well-being of our foster carers is our top priority. The more you feel supported, the more fostering magic you can spread across our community! Our support is as holistic as possible so you can come to us with any and every query throughout your fostering journey. We'll be here from your first enquiry and beyond approval as a foster carer.

“We’ve had a really positive experience of working with Fostering Barnsley. Our social workers have done everything to make it work, and have always accommodated our needs, giving us flexibility such as the option to provide respite placements.”

- Nicola and Steve



Want to learn more about support?

Contact our team today on 01226 978600 or arrange a call back by emailing us at fosteringrecruitmentteam@barnsley.gov.uk

visit www.fosteringbarnsley.co.uk

Here's how we can support you:

Comprehensive Training - We want our foster carers to feel confident in the care they give. Our training might start at assessment, with our Skills to Foster course, but it continues with year-round training for foster carers of all skills levels.

Dedicated Social Worker - Your social worker is there to offer advice, address any concerns, and make sure that everything is running smoothly. They are your go-to person for all things related to fostering!

Joined up support - Everything we do is to benefit Barnsley's young people, and we're proud of our experienced and friendly social work team. Our support line and out-of-hours team are always available to assist you.

Financial Support - We recognize the hard work and dedication of our foster carers with competitive allowances that cover the costs of caring for a child. On average, our foster carers receive £683 per week in fostering fees.

Peer Support and Networking - We host regular support groups and events where you can connect, share advice, and build friendships.

Sleepover Care - We understand the importance of taking a break. Our respite (or sleepover) care service allows you to take time off while making sure that the children in your care continue to receive high-quality support.

Holistic Support - Our holistic approach includes providing resources and working closely with schools to support your foster child's education.



Financial Support for Foster Carers

We truly appreciate the important role that our foster carers play in a child's life on a daily basis. Each week, they provide a loving home and life-changing care for Barnsley's children and young people. At Fostering Barnsley, we are committed to providing financial support to our foster carers that's effective and easy to understand. Our financial support makes sure you have everything you need to positively transform the lives of children and young people in your care.

Explaining our fees and allowances Weekly Allowance for Foster Carers

As a foster carer, you receive a weekly allowance to cover the costs of caring for a child. This allowance is based on your skills and experience as a foster carer, to match your dedication and expertise.

- ✿ Skills Level 1: Every new foster carer starts with an allowance of £135 per week. This is the base level for those beginning their fostering journey.
- ✿ Skills Level 2: With additional training and experience, you can progress to higher skill levels. Our skills Level 2 foster carers earn £210 per week.
- ✿ Skills Level 3: Our Skills Level 3 foster carers earn £390 per week.

Our Skills Level payments can be supplemented to suit the more experience you gain. We offer:

- ✿ A Specialist Premium whenever you care for a child or young person with a disability or behavioural needs. We pay £200 per week on top of your skills fee as we know you're putting in additional time to help a child whose needs are more complex. Emergency Support of £100 per week, for up to 4 weeks. This applies whenever you offer emergency care, or help a child for longer than the sleepover time arranged. Helping a child in an emergency might only last a couple of nights. For those instances, we pay our Emergency Support fee pro rata.
- ✿ Care shouldn't have to stop when a young person turns 18. If you're caring for a young person who'd like to stay with you over the age of 18, we'd love to support your household. Receive 50% of your skills based fee for anyone Staying Home. If you're caring for a child on a day care rate, this is paid at £9.50 per hour. We're proud to have an incredibly generous day care rate.

Did you know?

Foster carers benefit from favourable tax conditions, and National Insurance credits which count towards a pension?

For the full details and to learn more about our finances, download our Finance Guide.

visit www.fosteringbarnsley.co.uk/guides

Weekly Allowance for the Child or Young Person

We also offer an age-related weekly allowance for the child or young person in your care. This allowance covers all expenses related to the child's care. This might look like food, travel, and after-school activities.

Each week, you receive a combination of your skills level, and the weekly allowance.

❁ Jennifer is a Level 1 carer caring for Aidan, who is 14 years old. Due to his age, Jennifer receives a £220 age-related allowance plus £45 for age-related skills each week. This means Jennifer earns a total of £400 per week.

View more examples, and full breakdown of fees in our finance guide.

Available for download at
www.fosteringbarnsley.co.uk/guides

Additional Financial Support

Our support for you doesn't start and end with a weekly allowance. We want to make sure that you're prepared for everything, from the everyday tasks of clothes shopping to memory-making holidays.

This looks like:

- ❁ Annual clothing and uniform allowances to keep up with growth spurts, ink stains, and the latest fashion trends. We offer up to £180 per young person.
- ❁ A birthday celebration allowance so you can help the child or young person in your care feel special! This can be up to £249 per year to sort gifts, trips and unforgettable experiences.
- ❁ Holiday allowance of up to £498 per year.

Spending more time together

Like any rewarding work, feeling refreshed and relaxed yourself is essential. We offer all of our foster carers 14 days paid annual leave, which they can use at any time. Any children in your care would be paired with a respite foster carer for sleepover care. Want to spend the holiday together? We pay all annual leave dates, regardless of if you use it for yourself, or as a fostering family. We call our payment for holidays with the children using your annual leave a Time Together bonus.



Getting Started - Your path to fostering

You might have been thinking about fostering for a week, a month, or years. We know that the process to become a foster carer can look daunting. That's why we're here to reassure you that our process is easy and not too drawn out- all to make sure you feel confident to share the magic of fostering. Think of the fostering process as 5 easy steps:

Step 1

Schedule a Call

The first step is to reach out to us by booking a scheduled call back. During this call, you'll speak with our friendly support team.

Step 2

Home Visit

A member of our fostering recruitment team will visit your home. This is a chance to meet us in person, and you might be meeting your assessing social worker. We'll talk about fostering in more detail. This visit helps us understand your motivation for fostering and gives you a clearer timeline of your process.

Step 3

Fostering Application

We'll ask you to fill out an application form. This form requires detailed information but our team will guide you through the process and provide all the support you need. We normally see people return the form within two weeks.



Step 4

Assessment Process The assessment process typically takes four to six months to complete. Your dedicated social worker will visit your home regularly to gather detailed information about your family, lifestyle, and suitability to foster. This includes:

- ❄ Preparation training: You'll carry out training to prepare you for the fostering role. Topics to cover include the role and expectations of a foster carer, child development, managing behaviour and the impact of trauma. Background
- ❄ checks: A full Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and medical assessment.
- ❄ References: Personal references from people who know you well, your employer and, if you have children, your children's school.
- ❄ Home safety check: Ensuring your home environment is safe and suitable for a foster child.

Step 5

Fostering Panel

After the assessment, your social worker will compile a comprehensive report, known as a Form F. You will be invited to attend a panel with our team, where your Form F will be presented and we'll ask you a few questions. The panel will review your application and make a recommendation on your suitability to foster. It's not scary, we're a friendly bunch!

Approval and beyond

After an approval at panel, you'll become an approved foster carer. This means receiving a detailed induction and meeting your supervising social worker. Your supervising social worker is a dedicated point of contact for your fostering career.

What about matching?

You might be wondering how we match children and foster carers. Our team carefully considers your skills, experience and personality. Once we've found a child we think will be a good fit for you, you will get some more information and decide whether you want to move forward with the placement. You will be involved through the whole process and can always say no to a match. Once you're happy, your supervising social worker will help with introductions, preparation and check ins. There's only one thing left after that: celebrate the magic of fostering!

“We received the phone call from our assessing social worker to advise we were officially foster carers for Barnsley. Whoop whoop! We were so excited to receive the phone call, and I giddily phoned my partner... we enjoyed telling everyone about how different our lives would become.”

- Duncan and Edward, foster carers

Ready to start the journey?

visit www.fosteringbarnsley.co.uk

Next Steps

We hope you feel inspired to join us! We cannot wait to welcome you to our community. Our foster carers are invaluable: the more carers we have, the more stable and loving homes we can create for Barnsley's children and young people in care. Join us and experience the magic of fostering.

Ready to join the magic?

Contact us today!

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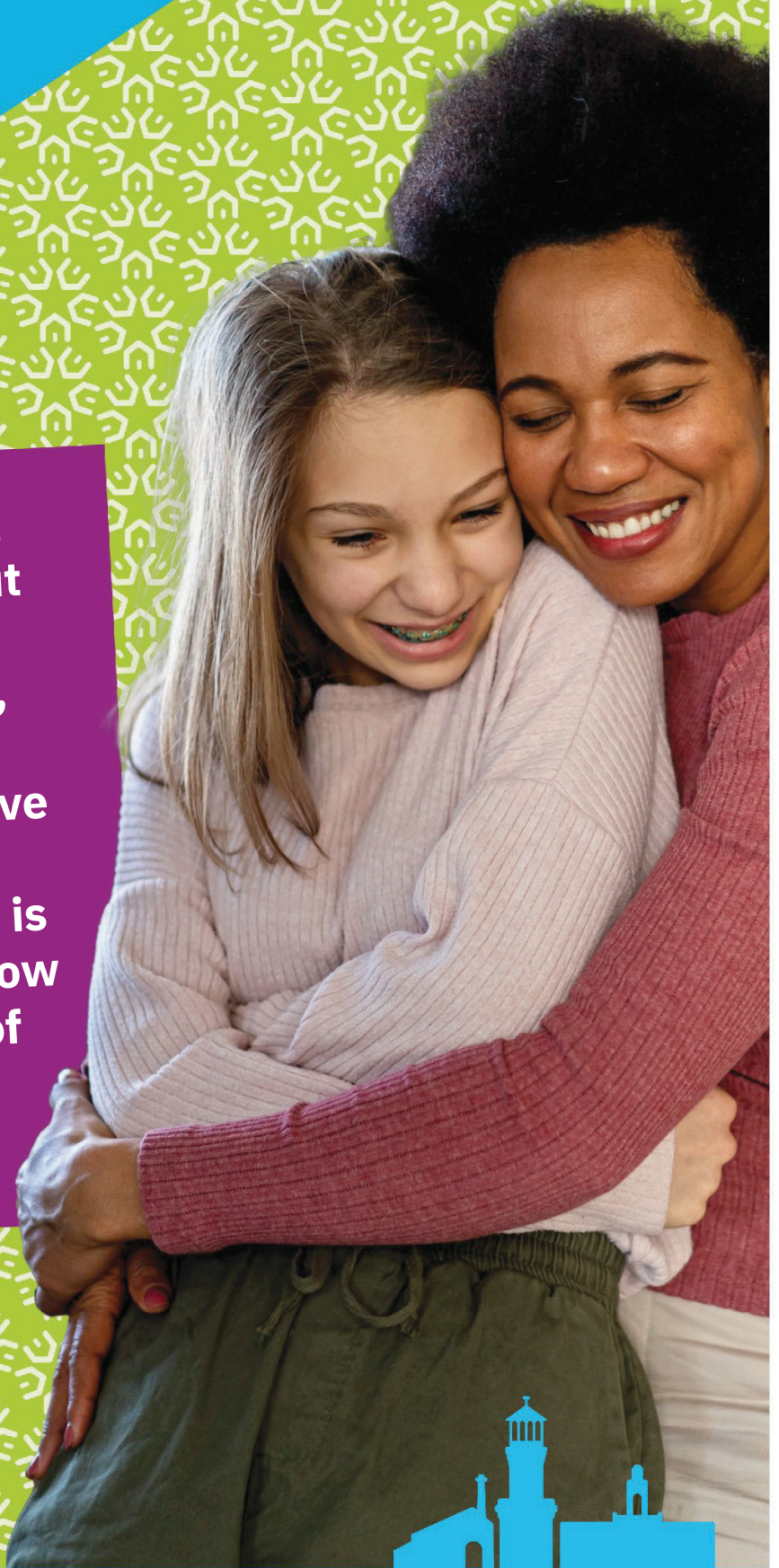




Fostering
Barnsley

“Being a carer can be challenging, but to see a child in your care flourish, become more confident, and have more self esteem before moving on is wonderful. To know you were a part of that is magic.”

- Monique, foster carer



Terms and conditions: This document was last updated in November 2025. We reserve the right to review and amend our rates at any time without prior notice.



BARNSELY
Metropolitan Borough Council