

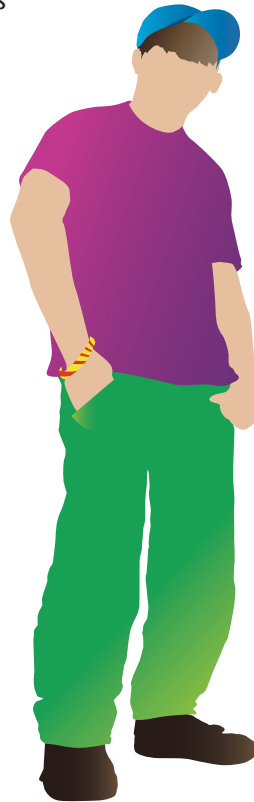
Fostering

Care for a challenge?
Fostering teenagers



Fostering Teenagers

This leaflet is specifically about adolescent foster care but should be read in conjunction with our fostering leaflet 'See children blossom before your eyes, when you foster' which gives general information about what fostering involves and how to become a foster carer.



What is a teenage foster carer?

Teenage foster carers provide care for young people from the age of 13. The length of the placement can vary between a few days, weeks, months or several years. Following their approval, all teenage foster carers must complete special training about understanding and managing challenging behaviour.



Who are the young people who need fostering?

Aged between 13 and 18 years, these young people are unable to live with their own families for many different reasons, including parental mental ill-health, drug and alcohol abuse, imprisonment, domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse or inability to provide consistent parenting. As a result, the young people may have difficulty in forming positive relationships, leading to low self-esteem. This is often reflected in their behaviour through lack of concentration, poor self control, inability to make safe choices, depression, anxiety, problems at school or low level offending.



What kind of person becomes an adolescent foster carer?

Like the young people they look after, adolescent foster carers come from many different backgrounds. However, they all have in common that they care about young people and want to help them through a difficult time in their lives.

You will need to have the ability to advocate for and communicate with young people about the issues which are important in their lives. You will also need to cope with the challenges that their behaviour may present while maintaining a constructive relationship and helping them develop positive identity and self esteem. You will need to be tolerant, flexible and resilient, able to deal with rejection without taking it personally. A sense of humour also helps!

Additionally, teenage foster carers will need to help the young person develop independence skills. They will be required to work with a range of other professionals and the young person's family, helping them to build bridges, where appropriate.

On a practical level you will need to have a spare bedroom available for the young person.



What support will I get?

All foster carers have access to a 24 hour advice and support line and are monitored and supported by a supervising social worker. There is an ongoing training programme and monthly support groups. Carers are linked with a mentor who is an experienced foster carer who will be able to give additional support during the first six months after approval.

In addition to this, teenage foster carers are among those who benefit from specialist training about managing challenging behaviour and there is a support group specifically for foster carers who look after adolescents.

Once you have completed this training, you will receive an allowance of **£425** per week which includes an amount to provide for the needs of the child. You will also receive an extra **£30** per week, if you have completed the NVQ Level 3 in Childcare. Additional payments will be made to cover holiday, birthday and festival expenses for the young people looked after.



The benefits of the new scheme are:

- Visits from a member of the fostering team at least fortnightly at the start of new placements - more if carers are having difficulties with their placement
- Carers will receive £425 per week which includes allowances for the young person
- Specific training geared towards caring for adolescents and the issues and problems they face
- Monthly scheme meetings with other carers to discuss issues and ways to enhance and better equip carers. These are on top of the benefits all carers get such as:
 - A 24-hour help and advice line
 - An experienced 'mentor', who is already caring for teenagers
 - Membership of the Fostering Network regular support groups
 - Holiday allowance payments of up to £450 per child
 - All necessary bedroom furniture and bedding
 - Mileage payments of 40p per mile - for training, contact etc
 - If a child is placed without any suitable clothing, an initial clothing allowance of up to £200 if evidenced as appropriate

- Opportunities to take part in outings and events for foster families
- All foster carers receive newsletters and correspondence about events and service updates

What we are Looking For

Teen Scheme Carers will need to:

- Provide a young person with their own bedroom
- Be understanding to the needs of young people
- Enjoy working with young people and teenagers
- Be flexible in their approach to tasks
- Instil and encourage young people to develop life skills for independent living
- Be able to work with birth families and professionals to ensure positive outcomes for young people
- Be prepared to act as an advocate for young people in their care
- Be committed to achieving NVQ Level 3 and attend other relevant training
- Enjoy new challenges
- Have a sense of humour
- Have good verbal and written communication skills



Interested?

For more information or an informal chat,
call us on **0800 279 9850** or **020 7364 1321**

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