

Remand **Fostering**

Time for a Change



Time for a change?

Thank you for your interest in Remand Fostering with London Borough of Tower Hamlets. This booklet is designed to give you information about Remand Fostering and to help you make the decision whether Remand Fostering is for you.

0800 279 9850

www.fosteringandadoption.co.uk



1 0800 279 9850

What is a remand foster carer?

Remand foster carers provide short-term care for young people between the ages of ten and seventeen whilst their case is resolved in the Youth Court. The length of a placement can vary between a few weeks and a few months. There are also some placements which are for only one or two nights [PACE beds]; these are an alternative to young people spending the night in a police cell before appearing in Court the next morning. During each placement you will be expected to look after the young person and help ensure they keep to any bail conditions the court makes and accompany them to court appearances. It will be a real advantage for you to have had experience of teenagers and/or the youth criminal justice system. In addition to the standard training opportunities afforded to our foster carers, remand fostercarers will receive specialist training and support from the Youth Offending Team [YOT] in helping young people through the court system and make positive changes in their life.

What kind of person becomes a remand foster carer?

Like the young people they look after, remand 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 can be single or a couple. There can be children under sixteen in your household but you need to demonstrate your ability to manage to any potential risks.

Being lesbian, gay or less-abled are not barriers to becoming a remand foster carer. Mature people in particular have life experience that will be very valuable in caring for young people. Some may of course have brought up their own children.

Remand foster carers must be available at all times to offer placements which will always occur at very short notice. You do not need to own your own house but you must be in a secure housing situation and have sufficient space for a young person, at least one spare bedroom.

You will need to live within approximately one hour's travelling distance from Tower Hamlets. We welcome carers from both inside and outside the borough. These limits enable contact to be maintained between young people, education and their families.

You can't be a remand foster carer if you have a criminal record for offences against children. Having other criminal convictions doesn't necessarily mean that you can't foster but consideration would have to be given to the type of offence and how this might affect your suitability to care for young people.

What are the rewards?

Remand fostering isn't all about giving, you will also gain much from the experience. You will be making a difference to the lives of young people, often seeing their confidence and self-esteem grow.

What kind of help will I get?

You won't be left to cope on your own. You will be supported, at all times, both by a supervising social worker from the fostering development team and a Youth Offending Team practitioner. There will be regular visits to assist in ensuring that the placement is going well and ongoing training on a wider range of subjects to increase your knowledge and skills with regard to fostering and the criminal justice system.

What about financial help?

You will receive a weekly allowance to cover the day to day expenses of caring for and assisting a young person. This amount is £500 a week and is paid on pro-rata

How do I become a remand fostercarer for Tower Hamlets?

We hope that the information in this booklet has been useful in giving you an introduction to remand fostering. If you would like a further initial discussion, please contact us on 0800 279 9850 and a worker from the Recruitment and Assessment Team will be pleased to give you further information and to take your details, if you wish to go to the next stage there will be an initial visit to your home.



Initial home visit

This will involve workers from the Recruitment and Assessment and Youth Offending teams coming to your home to discuss remand fostering. They will inform you of the tasks and expectations involved, as well obtaining some information from you, which will enable them to assess whether you might be suitable for the role.

Following the meeting you will have time to think about whether you are still interested in becoming a remand foster carer and the workers will also discuss your case in their teams and with their managers. If both sides want to go ahead, we will ask you to complete an application form.

Once completed, we

- Invite you to the next three day preparation training group
- Allocate you to a social worker for a full assessment
- Start to request checks and references

Preparation training

The group is attended by all prospective foster carers and aims to increase understanding and knowledge about the

legal framework, the physical and emotional needs of looked after children and young people and working with Children's Services and families.

For remand foster carers there will be additional training run by the Youth Offending Team, which will focus on the criminal justice system and how to work with young people who have been remanded into the care of the local authority by the Youth Court.

Full assessment

A social worker will visit you over a period of three to four months to complete an assessment of your ability to be a remand foster carer and to prepare you for the role.

As well as talking to you, they will also speak (with your permission) to other people who know you in order to obtain as full a picture as possible of you and your family.

The social worker will write a report that is presented to the Fostering Panel, which will recommend whether or not you are approved as a remand foster carer. You will have the opportunity to read the report and say whether you agree with it.

Checks and references

We need to be absolutely sure that we only place vulnerable children in the care of adults with whom they will be safe. Therefore we carry out a number of checks and references, many of which are a legal requirement. These include a medical report from your GP, a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure, at least two personal references, checks with social services, housing and schools. We also carry out a health and safety check of your home.

The fostering panel

Once the report, training and checks are completed, you will be invited to attend the fostering panel. The Panel is composed of people from the local authority, as well as independent members, all of whom have expertise in the needs of looked after children. On the basis of the information that they have been given, they will recommend whether or not you are approved as a remand foster carer.

This may all sound very intimidating, but it is important to remember that our first priority is to ensure the safety of children and young people in the care of Tower Hamlets.

What happens after approval?

You will be allocated a supervising social worker from the Fostering Development Team who will provide you with ongoing support. You will sign an agreement which sets out the expectations of the remand foster carer and the department. We also ensure that you receive written information about policies and procedures and any equipment that you need, such as beds and bedding.

When a placement is needed, you will receive a phone call from the Fostering Development Team or from the Out of Hours social worker. Given the nature of remand fostering the placement will usually be required immediately. As well as your supervising social worker, there will also be a worker from the Youth Offending Team involved to support both the remand foster carer and the young person. Both of these workers or someone from their teams will be on hand to answer questions and give advice.

What other training and support will I receive?

All foster carers are expected to undertake regular training to ensure they develop their knowledge and skills.

There are also regular support groups and a 24 hour support service.

What if I am not happy with the assessment process?

The team manager of the Recruitment and Assessment Team can be contacted on 0800 279 9850 and will attempt to resolve whatever concerns you have and will advise you how to take this further if you are still not happy.

What should I do now?

If you would like to apply to become a remand foster carer or just want to find out more, contact us on 0800 279 9850 or email fostering@towerhamlets.gov.uk.



Useful contacts

Here are some contacts that you may find useful.

British Agency for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)

Saffron House
6-10 Kirby Street
London EC1N 8TS

Tel: 020 7421 2600
mail@baaf.org.uk

The Fostering Network

87 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8HA

Tel: 020 7620 6400
Email: info@fostering.net

Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

11 Carteret Street
London SW1H 9DL

Tel: 0207 271 3033
Website: www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk

Interested?

For more information or an informal chat,
call us on 0800 279 9850.

fostering@towerhamlets.gov.uk
www.fosteringandadoption.co.uk