



Foster for Lancashire

and make every memory count

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in becoming a foster carer for Lancashire County Council.

We would love to hear from you - we are your local authority fostering service and we urgently need foster carers.

Join our fostering family and we'll provide you with competitive payments, bespoke in-house training, and 24/7 support with offices throughout Lancashire, to enable you to focus on caring for our most vulnerable and precious children.


Who can foster and am I eligible?

We're looking for people who are patient, flexible, understanding, determined and keen to learn.

To be eligible to foster, you must:

- be over 21 years old.
- have a spare room for the sole use of our children; and
 - have lived in the UK for the last 6 months.

We'd love to hear from you and will support you every step of the way to join our fostering family.





There is no such thing as a typical foster carer, we need people from all different backgrounds to care for children from birth up to 18 years.

Your personal qualities and what you can offer to a child or young person are what matter to us most. We value the importance of creating inclusive and respectful fostering communities and welcome applicants from diverse backgrounds, genders, faiths, ethnicities, sexual orientations and abilities.

It doesn't matter if you are single or married, a homeowner or not, are in work or are at home full-time, we want to hear from you.

What is fostering and why foster for Lancashire?

There are many reasons why children may not be able to live with their families, which can be a difficult time for them, and they will need to be provided with a safe, warm, caring, stable and loving home – this is fostering. **This is where you come in.**

Fostering with Lancashire County Council is different because:

- We are proud that our Children's Services are rated 'Good' by Ofsted.
- We are a non-profit organisation with a wealth of experience and expertise in supporting families and communities.
- We provide you with your own social worker who will be there to support you, together with access to our 24/7 telephone advice line and a mentor who is an experienced foster carer.
- We offer support groups and regular social activities for you and your family, including our Family Fun days so you'll be able to get to know other foster carers, socialise and support each other and become part of a bigger community. In Lancashire we have invested in our own thriving Fostering Communities Project, which you may also wish to join.
- We care about our fostering families and we have our own well-being programme.
- We celebrate our foster carer's commitment to our children by offering long service recognition, rewards and celebration events.
- We deliver tailored training which starts before you're approved, for you and your birth children and we hold regular activity days which your birth children can take part in.
- We have a generous financial support package for our foster carers so you can focus on caring for our children. We provide additional welcome fees and payments for foster carers who look after groups of brothers and sisters, we may pay an enhanced fee when you care for children with additional needs and for parent and child fostering.*

* Subject to T&Cs please see website for details



- We will continue to develop your professional skills via our Mentoring Academy.
- We have our own in-house therapeutic informed psychologist led support team which you will be able to easily access and are committed to being a trauma informed service.
- We welcome carers who are thinking about transferring from an Independent Fostering Agency or other local authority. We will do our best to make this move as quick and easy as possible, recognising your skills and experience as an experienced foster carer. If you are caring for a Lancashire child we will match your current payments.*

* Subject to T&Cs please see website for details

Our children and the homes they need

All of our children are unique, of all ages, genders, ethnicities, and personalities. We always have a great need for foster carers for older children and larger groups of brothers and sisters.

You could be caring for children aged from 0 – 18, however, if you are a smoker, you will only be able to care for children aged 5 and over.

Short-term:

Looking after the child or young person until the time is right for them to move on to their lasting home. This could mean that they are able to live with their parents again, with a family and friends foster carer, on to adoption or to a lasting home.

A short-term foster carer looks after children needing somewhere safe to stay whilst plans are put in place for their future.

Respite: We need respite foster carers who can look after children and young people for short periods of time throughout the year, predominantly at weekends and during school holidays. This could be for children where they need a short break, or for children with disabilities.

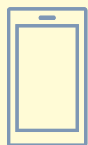
Emergency: Sometimes children are at immediate risk of harm and need a home no matter what time of day or night it is. Police have the power to remove a child at any time.

Long-term:
It isn't appropriate for all children or young people who need to live away from their birth family to be adopted. In these instances, a foster carer would look after them until they're adults.

Parent & Child: Involves having a child or children, with one or more of their parents in your home and supporting them to care for their children. This type of fostering is challenging but rewarding and the enhanced allowances reflect this.

Assessment process

12 steps to Fostering with Lancashire County Council



1. Initial enquiry:

A chat with our team the next working day of your enquiry.



2. Initial visit:

A home visit from one of the team in the following week.



3. Application form:

A support worker will help you fill this in within 2 weeks.



4. Proceed to assessment:

A social worker will guide you every step of the way through your 4-6 month journey.



5. Checks we complete:

These include medical, DBS, employment, ex-partner and personal references, all of which we pay for.

6. Preparing you to foster:

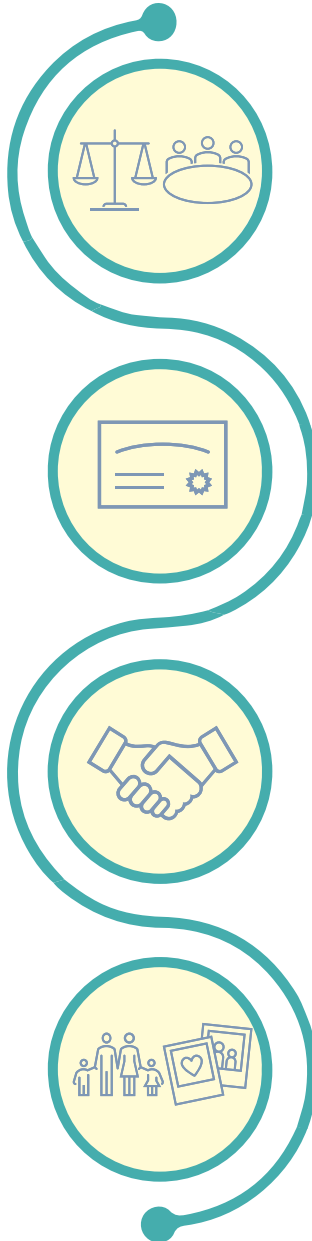
You will attend our 3 day Skills to Foster at County Hall in Preston and complete online training.

7. Assessments we complete:

These include an assessment of your home, any pets, and your finances.

8. Meetings we complete:

This will include at least 6 visits both virtually and at your home before your assessment is completed.



9. Panel:

Along with your social worker, you will attend panel and they will make a recommendation on you becoming a foster carer.

10. Approval:

Our Agency Decision Maker 'ADM' makes a final decision within 2 weeks of Panel.

11. Post approval support:

You will be allocated a social worker and a mentor.

12. You are ready to Foster:

Now it's time to make every memory count. Our Family Finding Team will match you when your home is the right home for our children.

Our Carers

“

It's all about the children for us. Knowing that the children we foster have somewhere safe to live and they feel settled is really important. We've always had great support from our social worker and Lancashire's fostering service. ” **Janet and Eddie**

“

We'll never give up fostering, the children bring us so much joy. Lancashire listened to our specific experience and the children with severe disabilities we wanted to offer care too. The fostering team have always been brilliant...we would recommend Lancashire to anyone that wanted to foster. ” **Ann and Chris**

“

I've been fostering for Lancashire for the past 30 years and have fostered over 100 children of all ages and backgrounds. Every fostering experience brings its own rewards and challenges but some of my stand out moments have been with the older children I have cared for. Teenagers have a zest for life and a great sense of humour and fostering them can be so much fun. ” **Carol**





We've asked some of our children what they thought the best thing was about being fostered and they said:

- I have a nice bedroom.
- It's fun and you get a nice home.
- People always help you.
- You have friends to help you and cheer you up.

We've asked some of our foster carers what is the best thing about fostering with us and they said:

- I love fostering it's rewarding.
- I like supporting children to see them happy and achieve.
- I love fostering and giving children the best start in life and making happy memories for them.
- The help and support you receive as a foster carer and the fabulous children.
- Making a difference to all the children/young people we care for.

Our Comprehensive Ofsted rated Good Support Offer For Foster Carers

We value our foster carers and the important role they play in caring for our children.

Fees

We provide a generous financial package to support you in your role as a foster carer and our recently improved allowances are highly competitive with independent fostering agencies. We pay weekly allowances in addition to welcome fees, holidays, birthdays, and festival allowances. There are enhanced packages for carers who support parent and child, children with disabilities and complex needs, and brothers and sisters. If you are already a foster carer, caring for a Lancashire child and thinking of transferring to us we will match your current fees. *

Support 24/7

You will have a social worker who will visit you regularly and support you with the fostering role.

We provide support to you and your family 24/7 this includes access to our out of hours phone line where we can provide advice and guidance to support you as and when you need it.

* Subject to T&Cs please see website for details

Learning, training, and development

When you commence your fostering journey you will be invited to our 3 day 'Skills to Foster' training course to help prepare you to become a foster carer. Once approved you will have access to a comprehensive package of training to help you develop in your role and to keep our children safe. We also offer more specialised training, such as trauma informed training, therapeutic parenting, and parent and child to name just a few.

Support Groups

We want you to meet your wider community of foster carers and we hold regular support groups across Lancashire, so you have access to peer support on your doorstep. We regularly have guest speakers and offer several specialist support groups, such as newly approved carers, parent and child, and sons and daughters.

Sons and Daughters

We recognise the unique role that your children play in fostering. During your assessment we will invite your children to take part in our specialist Sons and Daughters training. We also run events for sons and daughters providing an opportunity to meet other young people who come from fostering families, share experiences, and have fun!

In-House Therapeutic Support

Our SCAYT+ therapeutic team is led by Clinical Child Psychologists who work on strengthening the relationships between foster carers and the children in their care. Using a range of approaches underpinned by therapeutic principles, SCAYT+ will work with foster carers to help them build and maintain resilience and develop strategies to support the fostering family as a whole.

Mentoring Academy

In assessment we will match you to an experienced foster carer who will support you throughout the first year of your fostering journey. Your mentor will support you to feel confident, grow into the fostering role and will offer you peer support during assessment and beyond.

Fostering Communities project

This innovative project provides local peer support to small groups of foster carers to strengthen their support network. The communities are organised by our experienced foster carers and new carers will benefit from 1:1 support, activities, and informal babysitting.

Enrichment programme

We have an exclusive benefits scheme for you and your family which includes discounted activities, promotions, and events throughout the year including our annual fostering family fun day. We value all our carers and celebrate their achievements by rewarding them for their long service in fostering.

Lancashire Intervention for Families Team (LIFT)

We have a team of experienced foster carers who are trained to provide practical and emotional support to carers when they may need extra support. This targeted support aims to ensure carers can continue to care for the children in their care.

Informal Buddy Support

We can link foster carers up to provide extra peer support and pass on knowledge of a specific area of fostering.

Why choose to foster with Lancashire County Council?

If you are thinking of fostering, it can be quite confusing trying to work out what will be the best way forward for you and the children you will care for.

We are your local authority fostering service, our Children's Services are rated 'Good' by Ofsted, and you are making the right choice by fostering with your local council.

There are many wonderful reasons to become a registered foster carer with Lancashire County Council. Below are some of the reasons we're so successful:

1. We always match our children to our foster carers in the first instance, this means it will be unlikely for you to have an empty bed for long.
2. We are a non-profit organisation and like all Local Authorities in the UK, are working extremely hard to reduce our use of Independent Fostering Agencies.
3. When you foster with us, your social worker and the children's social worker are working for the same organisation, following the same policies. We work in the best interests of the children, to achieve the best outcomes for them.
4. We also work closely with our Education Department, including the Virtual School, our Inclusion Team for Children with Disabilities and also our Leaving Care Team to ensure we can support you to provide the best care for our children.
5. As one of our foster carers you will become part of the local fostering community, having lots of other foster carers living close to you. You will be able to take part in local training and support groups, and you will be caring for children from your local area.

6. Keeping children with our own carers means that we can keep everything 'in-house', making communication for the child, their foster carer and the services supporting them as streamlined as possible. This means less disruption and better outcomes for our children.
7. As your local council we are committed to being trauma informed and we have invested in our own inhouse therapeutic support team located within the fostering service so you can access timely and comprehensive support in your role as a foster carer.



Ready to become a foster carer?

Foster for Lancashire and make every memory count.

Enquire today with us, we'd love to hear from you!



Call us on freephone

0300 123 6723

Or fill out the online fostering enquiry form at lancashire.gov.uk/fostering

You may have questions, or you may just want to talk about your interest with someone. Our dedicated and friendly recruitment team will talk you through the process.

If you aren't ready to call us or to apply yet, there are lots of questions and answers on our website to help you.

Information is available at lancashire.gov.uk/fostering

Come along to one of our fostering information events



Follow us on social media for the latest fostering event information and updates:

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twitter.com/LancashireCC

[instagram.com/LancashireCC](https://www.instagram.com/LancashireCC)

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