

Your guide to fostering

“ It is a challenge, but I would say to anyone who is thinking about fostering to go for it. Pick up the phone and find out more. It doesn't matter what your background is, as long as you have lots of love and patience. ”

Chris, foster carer

What is involved?

Foster carers look after other people's children in the foster carers' own homes (short or long- term) and make a real difference to children's lives. Foster carers offer loving care for children and young people who are often distressed about being separated from their families. Separation from the family can be for a number of reasons: illness in the family, abuse, or because their parents cannot manage their behaviour. A carer will need to be able to help a child or young person through a difficult time in their life, caring about their feelings and meeting their needs.

Foster carers provide a safe and stable home for as long as the child or young person needs it. This may mean days, months or for a year or more, or until they are old enough to live independently. Foster carers promote growth and development and encourage hobbies and interests. They help children and young people keep in touch with their own family and other people who are important in their lives. They also act as a link with social workers, education, health and other specialist workers.

Islington is looking for foster carers for children and young people of all ages but particularly for teens aged 11-16. Islington also needs carers to look after brothers and sisters who need to stay together.

Is fostering right for me?

You need to have:

- at least one bedroom available for fostering;
- to live in or near to Islington;
- flexibility and understanding of children and young people;
- a sense of humour along with a willingness to learn and enjoy a challenge;
- good spoken and written English and
- time, energy and enthusiasm for children and their interests.



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What experience/qualifications do I need?

You do not need formal qualifications but you do need to be good with children and young people, be able to keep them healthy and safe, and help them make good progress at school. This also means you must have a good standard of both spoken and written English. Islington foster carers come from many different cultures and backgrounds and may be couples or single people, with or without their own children, living in owned or rented accommodation.

How can I become a foster carer?

Regular information sessions about fostering are held at the Town Hall, Upper Street, N1. Phone 020 7527 5933 for more details. These meetings give you the opportunity to hear more about fostering and to meet other carers who foster for Islington. Successful applicants will be visited at home and invited to a 3-day training course, which is held every 8 weeks. Full references on all applicants will be taken up. The whole process can take up to 6 months.

Family Information Service

Children's Services
222 Upper Street
London N1 1XR

T 020 7527 5959
E fis@islington.gov.uk
W www.islington.gov.uk/fis

How much could I earn?

From April 2010, the allowances paid to foster carers will start from £215 per week to be spent on the child and expenses. The allowances for a child over 10 are £300. You will receive a reward payment of £133 per week, plus £100 reward per child for carers who have 2 or more children. In addition you will receive one payment for the child's birthday, one payment for the religious holiday celebrated by the child, and one payment for a holiday for the child.

Further training

All approved foster carers must complete basic training and once approved must complete the CWDC (Children's Workforce Development Council) programme. Foster carers who are interested in doing further training are encouraged and supported to achieve additional qualifications. Foster carers holding a NVQ level 3 qualification are paid an additional £100 per month. Carers who complete the Fostering Changes course will receive a single payment of £125.

Useful contacts:

Islington Fostering
0800 073 0428
www.islington.gov.uk/fostering

**Fostering Recruitment Duty Social Worker
(Islington)**
020 7527 7933

Fostering Network
www.fostering.net