Welcome to Jay Fostering

Information booklet for prospective foster carers

Introducing Jay Fostering

Hi. Thank you for expressing an interest in us.

We are a family owned and run Independent Fostering Agency based primarily in the East Midlands. The company was originally created in 2003 by Joy Berry and her son Richard, who remain the owners/directors today.

We are an independent organisation that has been given permission from the government to offer homes to children who need fostering. Because of our reputation, Social Services Departments now ask us for far more homes than we can supply. We are therefore looking for more foster families to join us...

We are regulated and inspected by OFSTED. They check that we do things properly and in accordance with strict laws and regulations. We have always prided ourselves on exceeding the standards laid down by government, and in 2007 we achieved the best possible quality rating of "outstanding". You can read the report for yourself by going to the OFSTED website (www.ofsted.gov.uk) and typing in our name.

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Our offices...

We have facilities throughout the Midlands and a fully mobile social work team, so no matter where you live we will be able to support you. Our administration headquarters is outside Leicester, Junction 21 of the M1 Motorway.

Our primary aims and objectives are...

- To enable children placed with us to experience consistent and secure placements.
- To support our foster carers and make them feel valued and appreciated.
- To enable children placed to achieve and excel.
- To only place children appropriate to your family and give you as much placement choice as possible.
- To promote an awareness and proactive approach to valuing diversity, including disability, sexuality, gender, language, culture, race, and religion.
- To ensure that we exceed in all regulatory requirements and standards.

Our experienced staff team ensure a high level of support, training and supervision for all our foster carers.

We have a thorough recruitment and assessment process, which fully conforms to legal requirements.

We have a Fostering Panel with a majority of independent members whose breadth of knowledge and experience has been commended by OFSTED.

Fostering with us...

What we are looking for in our foster carers...

We are looking for child orientated, enthusiastic individuals and couples who want to offer children a secure and stable home. In order to foster with us, you must have at least one spare bedroom and have the commitment and drive to advocate for vulnerable children.

We have facilities throughout the Midlands where our experienced staff team ensure a high level of support, training and supervision.

We are not looking for degrees or certain qualifications. Your attitude, aptitude for learning and your life skills and experiences are what matter. Particular experience of rearing your own children would be a considerable advantage.

There is no minimum or maximum age to be able to foster.

What fostering opportunities we can offer...

We are asked to provide homes for children and young people of a variety of ages, backgrounds and needs. These could be for example:

- Young children who need a temporary foster home while suitable adopters are found.
- Young children who need a foster home due to their mother going into hospital or prison.
- Asylum seeker children who need a permanent foster home.
- Teenagers who need a foster home prior to moving on to independence.
- Children who need a home for the foreseeable long term future.

In general, the different types of foster placements we provide are as follows:

- **Short term placements**
  These are placements that are usually between 1 month and 2 years in duration. They are usually task centred placements.

- **Bridging placements**
  These placements are specifically to prepare a child for a long term plan. This could be to prepare them for adoption, move to a long term placement or even rehabilitation back to birth parents or extended family. The majority of the younger children come within this category.

- **Long term placements**
  These placements are made for the foreseeable future, and usually until the child/young person reaches independence. If you are new to fostering, you will not be able to take long term placements straight away. Your approval can extend to long term once you have proved your skills, abilities and commitment with shorter term placements.

- **Parent and child placements**
  These placements usually involve a young woman who is either pregnant or has recently given birth. The mother and their baby are both placed within the foster carers home so that the foster carer can provide encouragement, advice and support to the mother, and protection to the baby if things are going wrong. The foster carer will also be expected to contribute to an on going assessment so that a decision can be made at the end of the placement on whether they can remain together.

- **Respite placements**
  These placements are usually only 1 – 14 days and usually to give the main carer a break.

The service you can expect from us...

Placement fees:

- A placement fee that both reflects the true cost of looking after a foster child as well as providing you with a reward element for your hard work.
- The payment of certain travel expenses.
- A generous paid respite scheme.
- Extra payments in the summer holidays for certain activities and festive celebrations.

Taking a placement with us:

- You will always be fully consulted and given as much information as possible before a placement is made.
- We will never put you under any pressure to take a placement and will always give you the final say.

Supporting you in your own home:

- We are open and accessible. We always try and answer your call (not pretend we are out!) and if we are out, we will return your call within one working day.
- Email and text communication where appropriate.
- Monthly support group meetings with refreshments and we will take you out to lunch every third month too!
- A monthly supervision held at your own home to support you with your placements.
- 24 hour support with on call social workers.
- Tailored quality training on a range of appropriate subjects that are relevant to you.
- Practical assistance for you wherever possible.

Training you...

We have a rolling comprehensive training programme, topics including:

- Skills to Foster – for all new carers.
- Safe Care Skills.
- Health and Safety/First Aid.
- Attachment, Loss & Separation.
- Behavioural Management.
- Diversity, Equal Opportunities & Discrimination.
- Case Recording.
- Child Protection.
- Life Story Work.
- Life Skills & Leaving Care.
- Children & Alcohol & Illegal Drugs.
- Five Outcomes for Children.
- Webster Stratton Behavioural Management Techniques.
- Sexual Health.

The recruitment process...

The recruitment process is highly regulated by the Fostering Services Regulations *[2002]* and the National Minimum Standards *[2002]*. This means that we have to adopt a rigorous process which at times may seem rather invasive of your private life.
The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that we recruit foster carers who have the right qualities and experience to meet the complex needs of looked after children.
All assessments are conducted by our fully trained Social Workers. An Initial visit is usually made by a senior member of staff to reflect how seriously we appreciate your interest in us.

You will be asked to give your consent to a number of statutory checks, including:

- The Criminal Records Bureau disclosure.
- N.S.P.C.C. checks.
- Local Authorities Social Services Department.
- Employer references *(if applicable).*
- School references for birth children *(if applicable).*
- 3 personal references.
- Medical assessment.

Our Social Worker will then visit you and your family on a number of occasions to gather information to complete the assessment. Some of this information will include very private details about your life and childcare experience. A health and safety risk assessment will be completed on your home, which conforms to government standards. If you have fostered for an Agency or for the Local Authority in the past then we will request your permission to contact them and review their files about you and your family.

All the information from the assessment will be compiled into a format known as the "form F". This assessment will be shared with you on completion. It will then be submitted to the Fostering Panel. This is a body of experts who screen the suitability of all foster carers under consideration.

If for whatever reason you are not approved there is a process of appeal.

Only when your approval has been confirmed will you be in a position to accept placements.

Want to know more?

If you are still interested in us, we will arrange for a senior member of staff to visit you at home. They will be able to talk to you more about fostering and answer your questions in an informal way with no commitment.

If after this meeting you still want to go forward, we can refer you to our next "Skills to Foster" training course. This course will give you more of an insight into fostering. Once again, the course is free and non-binding. If you decide after the course that fostering is not for you, then that's okay too. If after the course you still want to go forward and we think you are suitable, then we can begin the formalised recruitment process.

A full copy of all our inspection reports are available on our own website as well as the official OFSTED website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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