

Chair's announcement

Our foster carers do an amazing job, making a massive difference to the life chances of some of Wiltshire's most vulnerable children and young people. Foster carers provide a safe and nurturing home for our children who have experienced abuse, trauma and loss.

We are currently seeking to recruit 100 new foster carers over three years so that our children can continue to live in their local communities, within Wiltshire. We started a campaign back in May 2020 at the start of Foster Care Fortnight to encourage more applications to foster. To date, we have successfully recruited 26 new fostering families towards our target. This is great news, but we still don't have enough to keep all our children in care within Wiltshire, especially for our teenagers.

With more Wiltshire Council foster carers, our children and young people can remain living locally, which means they are more readily able to remain in the same school, see friends and maintain relationships with their family.

We are sharing our message with each area board, with the hope you can encourage people to support and promote our recruitment campaign and highlight the importance of foster care in your local communities.

In all areas, we require more fostering families to look after our children in care. We know that some areas may need a significant increase whereas a few others may only need a few more. We would like our fostering service to get to the position where we are able to offer children a choice of foster carer to best suit their needs.

We especially need more foster carers who want to care for our teenagers and specialist carers, able to look after a parent and child and /or provide an emergency home at a time of crisis and/or look after children with complex medical needs and/or disabilities.

Louise, a 14 year old young person who lives in foster care, who has explained below how foster carers can help teenagers deal with the ups and downs of growing up.

"When I've been upset, they've cheered me up. They also help me understand my feelings and help me with my worries. They are also good fun too and don't take things too seriously. Children need foster carers who have lots of time. They listen to what I have to say and are interested in my thoughts. The three things I think are most important for foster carers are: listen to what I say, make me feel like I am a part of their family and get along with me in general."

To become a foster carer, people need to be over 21 years of age and have a spare bedroom. More details are available on the fostering website: www.fosteringwiltshire.uk

Fostering payments vary depending on the skills and experience of the foster carer, starting at £350 per week per child up to a maximum of £1300 per week for a specialist parent and child carer providing an assessment.

People can find out more information by:

- Calling fostering on 0800 1696321
- Emailing fostering@wiltshire.gov.uk
- Visiting www.fosteringwiltshire.uk
- Text 'Foster' to 60002

To have a discussion about how we can work together to recruit more foster carers in your local area, please contact Clare Goodspeed, the lead social worker for fostering recruitment by:

- Calling 01225 716510
- Emailing: claregoodspeed@wiltshire.gov.uk