

# Help change a child's future

**01823 756 100**

**We would love to hear from you.**

**Empower Fostering Services - Somerset  
Prockters Farm Offices  
Taunton - TA2 8QN**

# Empower Fostering<sup>★</sup> Enquiry Pack



Your family run  
fostering agency

01823 756 100

[www.empowerfostering.co.uk](http://www.empowerfostering.co.uk)



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**We are a family run fostering agency, founded by Foster Carers. We provide family focused fostering services, led by passionate, and experienced professionals who have the same vision.**

We value empathy and understanding because we, have experienced what it is like to open up your hearts and homes as foster parents and families.



# Why are we different?

As a family-run fostering agency, founded by a group of carers, we know exactly what it's like to be a Foster Carer. We started this agency because we wanted to share our passion and vision with other Foster Carers and professionals who care about children and young people. We understand the joys and challenges of fostering, and we are here to support you every step of the way.

## **Our direct experience inspired us to develop our own fostering services.**

We value all our Foster Carers and never underestimate all the hard work and sacrifices you will make in order to create a nurturing and safe environment for your foster children. We offer bespoke support packages to give you the tools and assistance you need to achieve this vision. We believe that, together, with you, we can empower positive change and offer the opportunity to change a child's life for the better, forever.

Our head offices are based in Taunton and we cover all South West regions, offering a personalised and local supportive service to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

**“We embrace our  
responsibility to lead by  
example”**





## **“We recognise that we are all learning”**

We are proud of all our Empower foster families who open their hearts and loving homes to support children and young people.

When you join us at Empower Fostering, you will join our growing family of caring, friendly and supportive professionals who will help you on each and every step of your fostering journey.

Our team is filled with a close-knit community of passionate professionals, committed to a child-centred culture. That same commitment extends to our Foster Carers; we'll equip, support and empower you with the tools, knowledge and practical support you need to succeed.

**We offer a 24/7 out of hours service with practical support, because we know how important and valuable this service is to Foster Carers.**

## **“Learning & Leading”**

## **“We work together to overcome challenges”**

Being a Foster Carer is a privilege; you have the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of children. Children who enter foster care have almost always experienced trauma, change and uncertainty. They need dedicated and loving adults to commit to them. By welcoming these wonderful children into your home, you too will have the opportunity to deeply enrich your own life. We recognise that making the decision to become a Foster Carer will be one of the biggest life decisions that you will make, impacting every aspect and facet of your life.

We are here at every step on your exciting journey and, if you would like, we will meet with you and your loved ones to give you the time and space you need to discuss any questions that you have. We expect everyone to have reservations and questions, this is completely natural. These first steps in exploring fostering can be both exciting and daunting, you are not alone!

## **Becoming a Foster Carer is very rewarding, but it can also have it's challenges.**

Many of the children placed with us will need additional care, patience, and support. At Empower Fostering we understand this, which is why we ensure that all our staff and Foster Carers are trained and offered support that is relevant and appropriate. We will utilise professionals, both internally and externally, to support you in providing the highest levels of care by understanding what is behind the behaviors so you can help the child feel safe.

**“We celebrate all success”**

**“Working together”**



“We encourage collaboration”

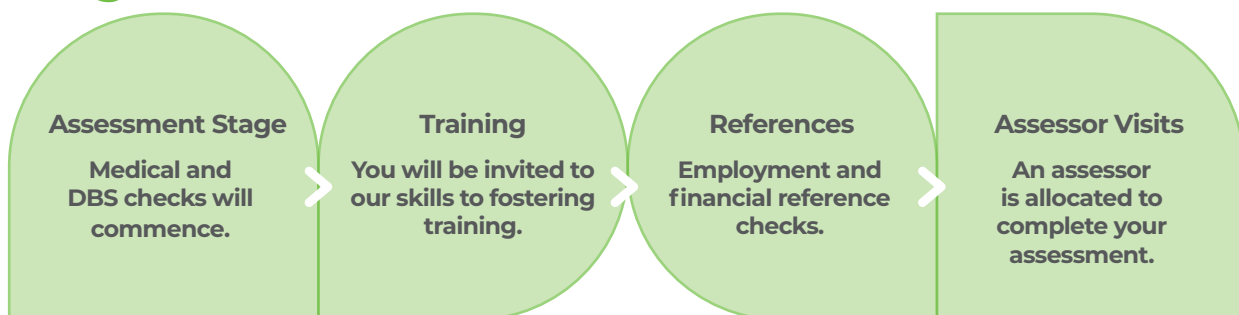
# Your Journey to becoming a Foster Carer

Following the completion of your application form and an initial home visit, the fostering application process usually takes between 3 to 6 months to complete. Each assessment is slightly different as each family is different, but all assessments must follow a similar course. Below is a breakdown of the stages step-by-step, so you know what to expect.

## Stage 1



## Stage 2



## Stage 3







**“Empowering Care”**



**“We champion for  
all our Foster Carers  
& young people,  
inspiring everyone  
to achieve their  
potential”**

# Is now the right time?

You may have been considering fostering for some time or this may be your first time thinking about it. There is no perfect time to foster but we can work with you to see if this is the right time for you. Part of this process is looking at who will be able to help and support you on your fostering journey. If you become a Foster Carer it is more than a career; it is a lifestyle choice and will impact your family life in ways you may not have considered. Empower Fostering can explore these changes with you and support your family in making the decision that is right for **YOU**.

## Transferring to Empower

We welcome all Foster Carers who are exploring transferring and have an interest in joining our Empower family. If you have a young person in placement and are worried about the transition or if you have some questions about the process, please get in touch with us; we would love to hear from you.

We would love to talk to you about fostering with us and learn more about your skills and experience. You can choose to meet us in person or call us at your convenience. We respect your decision and we won't pressure you or your family. If you decide to join us, we will follow the Fostering Network Transfer Protocol to make the process smooth and efficient. We will support you and your family every step of the way.



# Our Core Values

## We Empower Care by:

- Treating every member of Empower and all young people with compassion, understanding and respect.
- Listening, learning and supporting each other.
- Championing for all our carers and young people, inspiring all to achieve their potential.

## We Work Together by:

- Celebrating all success.
- Working together to overcome challenges.
- Encouraging collaboration to enable the highest levels of support.

## We Learn & Lead by:

- Recognising that we are all learners.
- Embracing our responsibilities to lead by example.



**Empowering Care**  
Treating everyone with compassion, understanding & respect.



**Working Together**  
Working together to overcome challenges.  
(One family)



**Leading & Learning**  
We embrace our responsibilities to lead by example.





# Why choose Empower Fostering?



**Support** - We're here, by your side, with unrivaled support, available 24/7.



**Income** - You will receive a competitive weekly fostering allowance, tax exemption and tax relief.



**Community** - We host multiple events, support groups and fun activities throughout the year as part of our fostering family.



**Career** - Enjoy a rewarding career whilst changing a child or young persons life.



**Training** - Comprehensive, ongoing training to support the challenges and success of fostering.



**Holidays** - To look after others, you must look after yourself; paid respite helps you recharge.



**Who we  
are & what  
we do**



# Becoming a Foster Carer

Empower fostering are registered with Ofsted to care for children and young people between the ages of 0-18 years old. Statistics from the Fostering Network and Department for Education show there is a national shortage of approx 6800 carers in England. The main age range of placements needed are for children aged between 11-16 years.

**“You will never do anything more rewarding”**

Matching children and young people with the right Foster Carers is our highest priority. This is why we need **YOU**. We need a wide variety of Foster Carers able to meet the varying and dynamic needs of the children in our care; all of whom need a loving family and home.

We need Foster Carers to support us in caring for:

## **Teenagers**

Teenagers are children too, and our young people will likely have had a chaotic childhood prior to coming into care and will come from a wide variety of backgrounds.

## **Sibling Groups**

We strongly believe that all siblings should be placed together where appropriate and wherever possible.



## **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)**

Children and young people who are seeking asylum in the UK but have been separated from their parents or carers.

## **Parent & Child**

These are specialist placements where a parent and their own child come to stay in your home, with you offering support and guidance.

**Parent & child placements are often short term for 12-24 weeks and require Foster Carers to support in assessing parent(s) skills and abilities.**

## **Solo Placements**

All young people require lots of love but some children might need additional support and may not be able to be placed with other children or young people. These placements could be short term, emergency, or long term.

# Fostering & Finances

**We understand that finance is a part of any decision to become a Foster Carer. You need to be financially stable to provide a safe and caring home.**

This is not just about the financial reward and as an agency we provide:

- A generous financial allowance
- Fostering is classed as self-employed and this attracts specialist tax allowances
- Training and access to advanced qualifications
- 24 hour 365 days per year support
- A minimum of 14 days paid annual leave each year
- You could earn up to £742 per week

**“Change your career. Change your lifestyle. Change a life. Foster with our Empower family.”**





Foster Carer pay rates are not regulated by the government so each private agency or local authority can decide how much they reward their carers. Local authorities often pay the minimum pay rates and private agency rates, like ours, are often much more generous.

Foster Carers are classed as self-employed and earn a weekly fostering allowance for each child or young person they look after. The amount of allowance paid depends on the type of placement. However, below is a helpful table of some of our fees and allowances:

Newly approved Foster Carer	Up to <b>£470</b> per week
Experienced & fully trained Specialist Foster Carer	Up to <b>£742</b> per week
Parent & Child Placement	Up to <b>£845</b> per week
Sibling group	Up to <b>£900</b> per week



**The act of caring  
is simply heroic**



# Foster Carer Tax Benefits

Foster Carers are treated as self-employed and the Government has introduced a special tax relief for Foster Carers.

Foster Carers are often exempt from paying income tax on their Fostering allowance in accordance with the governments Qualifying Care Relief.

## The qualifying amount - 2 parts.

- Part 1** A fund amount of £18,140 for each household for a full year
- Part 2** A weekly amount for each cared for child or adult
- £375 for children under 11
  - £450 for children aged 11 or over

If your total payments are less than the qualifying amount HMRC will treat you as not making a profit or loss for the year, so you do not pay tax or Class 4 National Insurance on your foster care income.

**Please note that it is recommended that you take independent advice on your own tax position and check the HMRC website for the latest allowances.**

**<https://www.gov.uk/support-for-foster-parents/tax-arrangements>**



# FAQ

## Can I foster if I am single?

Anyone can foster as long as they demonstrate that they have the skills and capacity to care for a young person. You need to be resilient, kind and have a good support network around you.

## How long does the process take?

The length of time for assessments varies depending on individual circumstances but we aim to complete assessment within three to five months on average.

## Do I have to have a spare room?

Yes, you do need to have a spare room. All children must have a room of their own unless they are a sibling group and the social worker agrees that they can share a room.

## I am over 60 can I apply?

We welcome applications from people of any age and there is no upper age limit. You will have a medical with your GP and as long as you are physically and emotionally fit enough to support young people then age is not an issue.

## How long will a child be matched with me?

This all depends on the individual child's plan and everyone is different. We will ensure that you are made aware of the plans from the start and will support you in decision making and ensure that the child's voice is heard in all decisions.

## **Will I get to meet the child before they move in with me?**

We will always try to support a positive transition for all young people, although sadly this is sometimes not available. We will share all of the information we have and ensure that all young people are well matched with Foster Carers.

## **I have a criminal record can I still foster?**

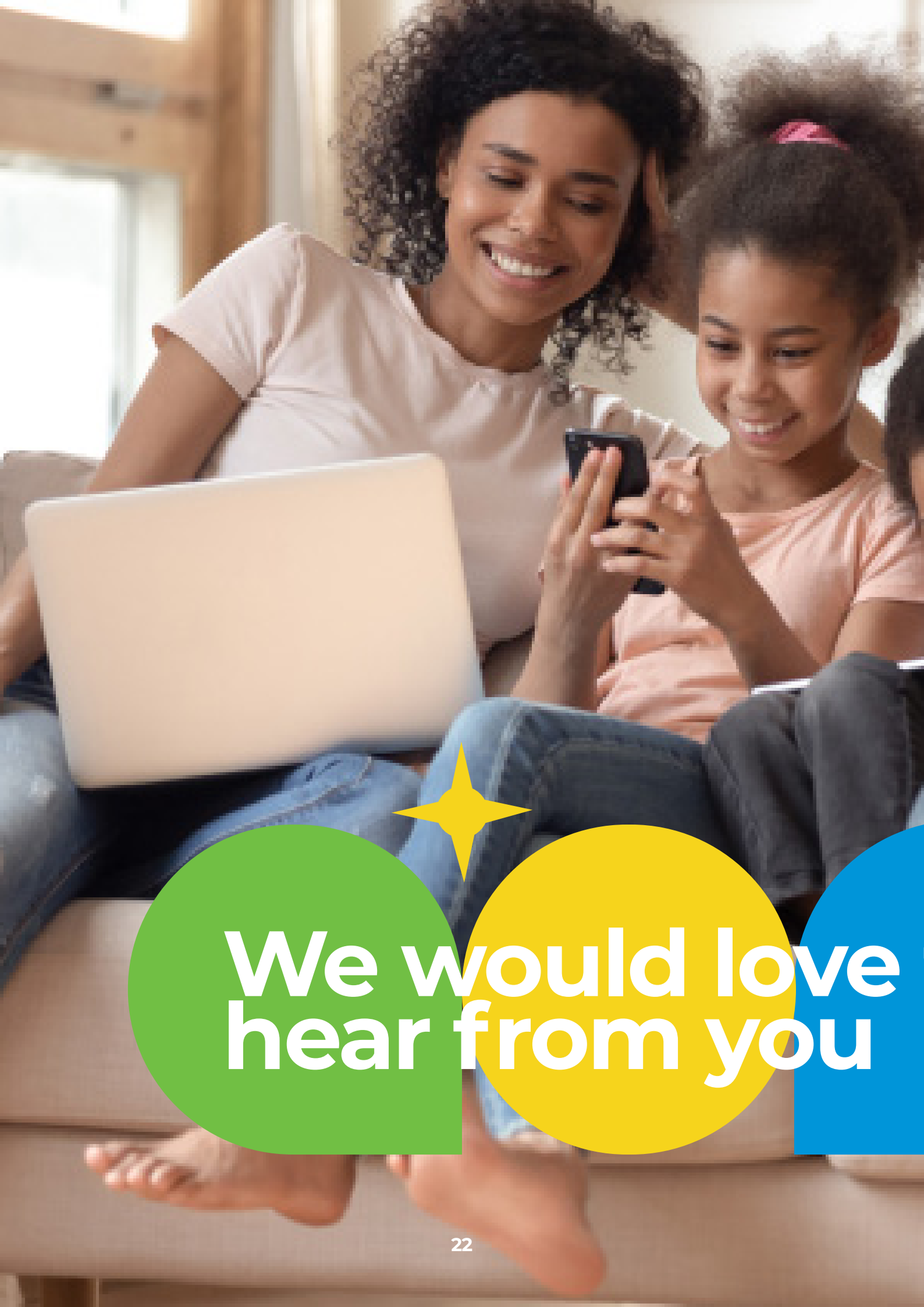
A previous conviction will not necessarily preclude you from fostering. Much will depend on the nature of the offence and when it occurred. We will carry out an enhanced DBS check and would ask that you are open and honest from the start with any convictions. This way we can assess whether you can continue on the assessment journey. Some convictions such as offences against children will preclude you but we will be honest with you about this from the start.

## **What training will I receive?**

Empower Fostering employs a bespoke and tailored training program. Some of this is held online and some is face to face training. As part of your assessment we will run workshops on top of your Skills to Foster course. Again, these will be both face to face and online depending on the need at the time. We will try to be flexible and ensure that this fits around your life and the schedules of the young people in your care.

We are so pleased that you have taken the time to find out more about Empower Fostering and we hope that this has answered some of your questions.

If you are interested in fostering and would like to have a friendly, no pressure chat in person or over the phone, please give us a call, email or visit the website. We would love to hear from you and support you on this amazing journey.



**We would love  
hear from you**





to

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