



TFF NEWS

Fostering Foundation Update

16th April 2024

Celebrating Unity in Diversity: A Special Message from our CEO

Dear Fostering Foundation Family,

As we publish our April newsletter, I am filled with immense joy and gratitude for the beautiful tapestry of diversity that defines our Fostering Foundation community.

In the past weeks, we've witnessed two significant religious occasions – Good Friday for our Christian friends and Eid-ul-Fitr for our Muslim brothers and sisters. These celebrations remind us of the values we hold dear: compassion, love, and unity.

In the spirit of togetherness, let us embrace this unique convergence of festivities as an opportunity to strengthen the bonds that unite us. Regardless of our faith backgrounds, we are all connected by our shared commitment to making a positive impact in the lives of vulnerable children.

As CEO, I am immensely proud of the inclusivity and acceptance that define our organization. It is through embracing our differences that we truly embody the spirit of fostering – creating a nurturing environment where every child feels valued and supported.

May the joy of Easter and the blessings of Eid-ul-Fitr inspire us to continue our mission of fostering love, hope, and belonging. Together, let us celebrate the richness of our diversity and the strength it brings to our Fostering Foundation family.

With my warmest regards, Sakina Khan - CEO, The Fostering Foundation





the
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Laying Foundations for the Future



How male foster carers can be powerful role models – and help tackle misogyny for young people in care

Unlike pretty well any other career, men form the minority in foster care. Although not a very 21st-century view, the care work sector – particularly when it involves children – has traditionally been seen as women’s work. The sad fact is that many men feel unable to come forward to work with children because they are frightened of marginalisation and suspicion – quite frankly, they are frightened of being labelled as risky adults.

This also leads to a lack of male teachers in nurseries and primary schools. One very important impact of this trend is that some children may never have experienced a strong male role model during their childhood. So, the importance of a male foster carer on a young life cannot be overstated – either as a single carer or as part of a couple.

A male foster carer may be a young person’s very first positive experience of an adult male – other men they have known may have left them, abused them, been violent in the home, broken promises, misused drugs or alcohol... As a man who fosters, either singly or in a couple, you have the chance to help a child learn how to establish a trusting, safe and nurturing relationship with men.

For children in care, living with a male foster carer offers the chance to form a trusting relationship with a man and to have contact with an older male who understands their needs. It is important that these children grow up with positive images of men being fun, creative, nurturing and safe in a domestic setting – this is particularly vital for young males who have adverse childhood experiences (ACE), and who themselves are at risk of inadvertently continuing the cycle of abuse and violence if they do not have positive role models to emulate.

Through being a model of supportive and nurturing masculinity, you can break the pattern of “boys will be boys” who grow into men who are uncaring and abusive.

Setting an example in a safe way

It is, of course, necessary to ensure robust safeguarding measures are in place to ensure safer caring. A child’s past experience may make them feel less safe with a man and more likely to misinterpret a man’s behaviour. Avoiding contact with the child is not a solution – for their future wellbeing, the child will benefit from a positive male role model.

However, a young person’s individual needs must be taken into consideration when planning how to care for them, and should always be part of their pre-placement care plan. All foster carers need to think about safer caring issues and, for male foster carers, this can be a particularly challenging aspect of the role.

How can you balance the need to protect yourself alongside the need to provide care to those you foster? Everyone needs to make sure children are safe and feel safe and foster carers should not put themselves in the position where their behaviour might be misunderstood.

Here at The Fostering Foundation, we provide Skills to Foster training to help tackle gender-specific issues for both our carers and young people of all genders. Our network of wonderful foster carers are supported throughout their work with us from day one, whether that’s provided essential training, extra skills, additional support or group meet-ups – as well as contact with fantastic local support from foster carers in your community.

For all genders of foster carer, all you need is a big heart, space in your home and willingness to learn from and work with the wonderful range of young people who will come into your care – you and the child will both be the richer for it.

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Latest News By Region

Bristol and Exeter Region

Dear carers, I must say how proud of you, we all are, for everything that you have been involved with in both regions over the past few months. The life of a foster carer is seldom straight forward and you all have been managing so many varied situations and making massive differences in the lives of the children you care for!

Bristol

We are expecting a new addition to the team – a new ssw - to start very soon and who has a lot of social work and fostering experience. Please come to the next support group to meet and eat cake! We have young people moving onto independence having lived with carers for a long time. It is amazing to know that these young people will remain part of your families long term beyond them turning 18 or moving out. This shows the great strength of relationships that you form!

We are pleased to say that we have young people doing their GCSEs soon – having done their mocks recently. We are extremely proud of your young people and acknowledge the great deal of support that you have been providing to help them manage during this time. In addition to the year 11's we have many children receiving amazing school reports and achieving great results - really well done.

We have lots of young people that you are supporting with complex health issues. One young person has received some really positive news about their health condition which is great news. Well done for getting through this!

We have had two really well attended carer workshops - CSE&CCE and LADO. These are great opportunities to learn together and share experiences. We look forward to doing lots more of these. We are going to continue monthly face to face support groups so look forward to seeing you all. We have prospective carers coming into assessment so look forward to welcoming some new faces to these sessions! Izzy, our support worker, is continuing to do direct work with young people and will be attending a support group so you can meet her shortly.

Exeter

We have had one carer household retire so we thank them for all their efforts and wish them well for the future. We have had one new carer couple approved and also have prospective carers in assessment so there will be new faces at the support groups! We are excited to be holding monthly support groups at the Kenn Centre so come and meet up! It will be really good to meet in person and it will give our new carers an opportunity to start getting to know everyone.

The Cullompton office has been part of the local Easter trail. Our young people have decorated the office window onto the high street – thank you for helping your young people to do all the lovely art work that has been on display! This has brought a lot of attention and admiration on the trail from the public!

We are extremely proud of the support that you all provide to your young people. We are seeing such a high standard of care and we are really impressed by the therapeutic responses and strategies you use. You have been so busy over the school holidays including holidays and trips in the UK and abroad. It is great to see you providing young people with so many experiences (and must acknowledge that you probably need a holiday on your return!) You are managing some challenging situations and the strength of your relationships with your young people comes through so strongly at all times. This includes carers who have new young people living with you as well as young people who have been with carers for a long time! Everyone's commitment to better understanding your children's needs is amazing.

Latest News By Region

Tavistock Region

I hope you have all had a lovely easter and enjoyed lots of easter eggs! Over the past few months, we have had much to celebrate from the many outstanding outcomes for so many of our children, to reflecting on the brilliant work our foster carers do. Please see below some of the celebrations for our children and foster carers:

Well done to IP who received a distinction in childcare.

Well done to MP who continues to thrive in college, with exploration now around MP going to study at university in Australia.

Well done to ET for overcoming her fear by getting into a swimming pool.

Well done to BT who is vocalizing more words, and is using Makaton.

Well done to TD who passed his Motorbike test.

Well done to FS who has joined the scouts.

Well done to LD who has been accepted for a place at Dutchy College.

Well done to JR for having children with complex additional needs and for being a wonderful foster carer.

Well done to K&ML for being proactive and advocating for their young person's educational outcomes.

Well done to R&CN for doing a brilliant job, and how well the young person is developing in their care.

Well done to M&DA for their hard work, and how well the children develop in their care, plus the praise they have received from the Local Authority.

Thank you to R&HS for helping out the young person whilst their foster carer was away.

Well done to AC for being supportive with their young person and also helping them transition with moving with new carers.

Well done to S&TW for being proactive in supporting with family time arrangements, plus the praise they have received from the Local Authority.

A huge well done to our children and our foster carers on their celebrations and achievements. Well, done to you all!

We wish to extend a very warm welcome to the foster carers who have joined us since our last newsletter. We have gained households from various areas over the last few months and we know that some of you have had the chance to meet each other or indeed already know each other.

We would like to take this opportunity to say an official hello to R&HS, and F&C BG, and to offer congratulations on being approved as new foster carers.

Next Face to Face Support Groups:

Plymouth Foster Carer Support Group – 23rd May 2024, 09:30am – 11:30am

Tavistock Support Group – 18th April 2024, 10:00am – 12:00am

Bodmin Support Group – 18th June 2024, 10:00am – 12:00am

Support Groups will also continue to be held virtually, including our Therapeutic Support Group. You should have all received details of our Foster Carer Support Groups. If for any reason you are not in receipt of our Support Group's schedule then please make contact with our Admin Team who will be happy to resend this.

We would like to show our appreciation to you for your dedication in welcoming children into your homes, and into your families. Your dedication is seen and so very appreciated by all at The Fostering Foundation.

Thank – you!

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about CLICKBAIT

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Clickbait is a controversial online marketing strategy which uses sensationalist (and frequently misleading) headlines to encourage engagement with an article, image or video – often playing on users' emotions and curiosity, while much of the actual content is of questionable accuracy. Clickbait is also sometimes used to disguise scams, phishing sites and malware.

HARMFUL MISINFORMATION

Clickbait tends to play fast and loose with the truth, opting for eye-catching content over objectivity. This is particularly dangerous for younger internet users, who are generally more susceptible to that type of material. A child could be presented with fake news, misleading articles and – in some cases – outright lies without fully understanding what they're viewing and why it's harmful.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Due to the misleading nature of many examples of clickbait, what may seem to be innocuous and child friendly could actually contain age-inappropriate material such as extremist political views or violent, pornographic or sexually explicit content. This is clearly a hazard for young people, who could be upset, disturbed or influenced by exposure to such subject matter.

HIDDEN MALWARE

While most clickbait is simply trying to promote engagement to earn companies additional revenue, some of it does redirect to dubious sites with the potential to infect devices with viruses or malware. This could put a child's sensitive data – such as their name, their location and their date of birth – at risk of being accessed and exploited by malicious hackers.

PRIVACY PROBLEMS

Some clickbait leads to sites which could coax a child into volunteering their personal data – using pop-ups to ask them for their email address and phone number, for example, in exchange for accessing additional content or subscribing to various services. Normally, this harvested information is then sold to third parties, who often utilise it for targeted adverts and other sales schemes.

A DRAINING DISTRACTION

Clickbait encourages spiralling consumption of online content, which could easily result in a young person spending hours scrolling aimlessly instead of doing something productive or interacting with family and friends. This can leave them tired, asocial and lacking focus – and, in the long term, can negatively impact their social skills, education and mental wellbeing.

IMPACT ON BEHAVIOUR

Depending on the type of clickbait a child is interacting with, you might notice negative changes in their behaviour. Weight loss scams, for example, are common among clickbait and have the potential to influence eating habits and body image – while deliberately inflammatory 'rage bait' articles can leave impressionable young people feeling irritable, restless or argumentative.

Advice for Parents & Educators

START A CONVERSATION

The sheer volume of clickbait can make protecting children against it quite challenging. It's vital to talk to young people regularly about the types of content they encounter online, so that they understand the risks of engaging with clickbait. If you're still concerned, it may also be wise to keep an eye on children's online activity to ensure they're not being tempted by clickbait headlines.

SPOT THE TELLTALE SIGNS

There are certain common elements in clickbait, including headlines and images that use shock and outrage to grab people's attention – as well as numbered lists, such as "8 Facts You Won't Believe Are True". Some clickbait combines several of these tactics to snag users' interest. Learn to recognise these techniques for yourself so you can teach children to notice them as well.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology writer with more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The Inquirer, she is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant who writes for Forbes, TechRadar and Wired, among others.



PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING

Encouraging children to question the legitimacy of sensational headlines and too-good-to-be-true promises will help them to become savvier online – and far less likely to be drawn in by clickbait content. These critical thinking skills will also serve to protect them in other areas of the digital world where misinformation is becoming increasingly common.

TAKE CONTROL

Many parents opt to place limits on how long their children can spend online each day, which obviously reduces the chance of exposure to clickbait. Alternatively, most internet-enabled devices have built-in controls that allow parents to manage what sort of online content their child can access – including filtering by age, which can screen out a percentage of inappropriate material.

SECRET TEXTING CODES YOUR KIDS COULD BE USING

- LMIRL** - Let's Meet In Real Life
Broken - Hung Over
CU46 - See you for sex
DOC - Drug Of Choice
NIFOC - Naked in front of computer
GNOC - Get Naked On Cam
GYPO - Get Your Pants Off
IWSN - I Want Sex Now
53X - Sex
LH6 - Let's have sex
TDTM - Talk Dirty To Me
B - Oral sex
SUGARPIC - Suggestive or erotic photograph
IPN - I'm posting naked
PAL - Parents Are Listening
PAW or PRW - Parents Are Watching
PIR - Parents In Room
POS - Parents Over Shoulder
9 and CD9 or "Code 9" - parents are nearby
99 - Parents are gone
KPC - Keeping Parents Clueless
MOS - Mom Over Shoulder
P911 - Parent Alert or Parent Emergency
WTTP - Want to trade pictures?
KOTL - Kiss on the lips
PRON - Porn
420 - Marijuana
ZERG - To gang up on someone
AF - As F**k
WTF - What The F**
WUF - Where You From
- WYCM** - Will You Call Me?
WYRN - What's Your Real Name?
Q2C - Quick To Cum
RU/18 - Are You Over 18?
RUMORF - Are You Male OR Female?
RUH - Are You Horny?
S2R - Send To Receive
MPFB - My Personal F*** Buddy
NALOPKT - Not A Lot Of People Know That
MOOS - Member Of The Opposite Sex
MOSS - Member(s) Of The Same Sex
MorF - Male or Female
C-P - Sleepy
F2F - Face-to-Face, a.k.a. FaceTime
HAK - Hugs And Kisses
ILU - I Love You
IWSN - I Want Sex Now
J/O - Jerking Off
KOTL - Kiss On The Lips
KFY -or- K4Y - Kiss For You
459 - I love you
ADR - Address
AEAP - As Early As Possible
ALAP - As Late As Possible
ASL - Age/Sex/Location
143 - I love you
182 - I hate you
1174 - Nude club
1337 or L337 - Leet, a coded alphabet
KMS - Kill Myself
KYS - Kill Yourself



Refers to a Butt



Refers to Penis



Refers to Masturbation



Refers to Intercourse

A huge thank you to Jez for sharing this information - it is always good to keep up to speed with the lingo!

SUPPORTING WITH EXAMS

Last year the NSPCC reported a 10% increase in young people receiving counselling support for exam stress. And our own data shows that almost 20% of young people visiting Kooth seek help about school/ college issues or exam stress.

With many young people preparing for their upcoming exams this term, please let them know that Kooth is here to help with any stress or anxiety they may be feeling.

We offer 24/7 instant access to anonymous and personalised mental health support to both young people at Kooth.com and adults at Qwell.io in your community, including those who do not meet thresholds or are on a waiting list for CAMHS or NHS Talking Therapies.

For additional support or to join a webinar 'on how to support during exam's' please visit <https://www.kooth.com/>

*information shared from Kooth's newsletter

5 TIPS FOR EXAM PREPARATION

- Plan a study timetable
- Prepare your study area
- Take breaks for your wellbeing
- Keep healthy eat, sleep and move
- Minimise distractions and overcome procrastination

kooth
Coping with Exam Stress?

- Positive affirmations
- Moving your body
- Mapping out your studies
- Taking a moment
- Talking about what's on your mind
- Journaling and music
- Taking care of your needs
- Take a break
- Switching off

Find free, safe and anonymous mental health and wellbeing support on **Kooth.com**

When To Use Out-of-hours Support

The Fostering Foundation offers an out-of-office-hours service to be used for support and advice during difficult situations and for the **reporting of emergency incidents or accidents relating to the young person in your care.** **Any non-emergency business should be dealt with during normal working hours.**

Your first priority in any situation is to safeguard the child and others in your care, and yourself.

Out-of-hours: TFF - Dial any TFF office number and you will be put through to the duty social worker

0117 967 3744 01822 618 068



The following checklist may help you decide whether your situation warrants a call to the out-of-hours duty worker.



Contact the our-of-hours service if:

- ✓ There is immediate threat to the child or young person's health, safety or welfare
- ✓ There is immediate threat to your health, safety or welfare.
- ✓ The nature of the situation give rise for concern that is causing worry and anxiety for you
- ✓ The child or young person requires emergency medical treatment, or has been admitted to hospital
- ✓ The child or young person has removed themselves from your address, or not returned to the foster home at the agreed time, or their whereabouts are unknown, or you have concerns about where they are
- ✓ You have had to contact the police or any other emergency service
- ✓ You need advice or guidance to make a decision which will impact on the care of the child, or you need to talk through a potential situation, before the next working day when the office is open

If in doubt, it is better to call.

The service is operated on a rota basis by the Fostering Foundation team of qualified staff who will have information about your family, background knowledge of the child and any previous or current issues of concern or risk.

The full details of your concerns and actions will be available to your supervising social worker and their manager on the next working day.

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Dear Carers

The statistics are out and Foster carer shortages are deepening in England, with one in eight fostering households having quit, and more leaving than joining, over the past year. This was combined with 2021-22 seeing the lowest number of applications to foster in several years. The founder of fostering advice and information service FosterWiki, Sarah Anderson, called the current situation a “ticking timebomb” as the total number of looked after children in the UK has increased every year since 2010. In the last five years the population of looked after children in the UK has increased by 10%.

This divergent trend in the need and its solution is one of deep concern to me. I have therefore given our **‘Refer A Friend’ scheme an upgrade**, in the hope that this will incentivise more of you to talk about the great work that you do and to get as many of your friends and family, interested in applying to become foster carers, as possible.

The Fostering Foundation will now pay an additional £150 to you, when your friend / family member has successfully cleared the initial visit stage and sent in their completed application form! The remaining two stage payments will stay exactly the same – when your friend / family member gets approved at panel, we will pay you £500 as a ‘thank you’ and when they take their first placement, you will receive a further £500.

Please help us fulfil our mission and reverse the negative trend that has got hold of the care sector – together, as a united force, we can make a difference. If you would like to organise a local awareness event or maybe get some handy leaflets / infomercials to keep with you, then please reach out to Tash, NDaniel@fosteringfoundation.co.uk

With my kindest regards

Sakina Khan

CEO



Interested in fostering and referred by a friend?

☎ 0330 010 2045 www.fosteringfoundation.co.uk



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Becoming a Panel member



Background Info

The Young Peoples Panel is one way of ensuring that you have a voice that is heard within The Fostering Foundation as it provides you with an opportunity to be involved in the process of recruitment for foster carers and our staff members.

We are looking for

Young People who can represent their local community. That means young people age 8 - 18 (or over) and from every ethnic and social background.

We want young people who are good at listening and talking. Full initial and ongoing training and support will be provided.



What happens during a young people's panel?

We aim to have up to 3 young people over the age of 8 years, make up each panel. There will be a Fostering Foundation staff member present throughout, to offer support as needed. There will also be the adults present that are being assessed.

You will participate in an activity (game, etc.) with applicants, and then take part in interviewing the adult applicant(s). You will then have an open discussion with the TFF staff member about how the panel meeting went and your thoughts about the applicant(s) being assessed. Your views will form part of the applicant's assessment and suitability to become foster carers or indeed whether they become a member of our staff team at TFF.

The experience of being involved when interviewing potential foster carers or staff applicants will aim to provide you with some invaluable skills. With the professionals valuing and respecting your views, the experience can also have a very positive impact on your confidence and self-esteem and make a great addition to your CV! You can rely on us to provide you with a reference and confirm your experience as a Young Person's Panel member, should you ever need a reference.

What will I gain

- To be an integral part of an exciting process that will contribute to the recruitment of good quality foster carers and staff members at TFF.
- Work alongside young people from all walks of life with many different experiences.
- Be able to take advantage of training and support to build key transferable skills that can be added to your CV.
- Refreshments and lunch will be provided when applicable.
- Receive a token of our appreciation for attendance, including a certificate.



Interested

If you would like to become the next Young Person's Panel member and are willing to complete online training, then please ask your carer to email: NDaniel@fosteringfoundation.co.uk