

TFF NEWS

Fostering Foundation Update

Dear All,

Welcome to the Spring issue of the TFF newsletter.

As we leave the first quarter of 2023 behind us, lets take a look at what we have got up to so far! The TFF Board of Directors convened an extraordinary board meeting in January to discuss the impact of the cost of living crises on our unsung heroes – our staff and our carers. The board unanimously agreed a one-off exceptional payment to all staff members and our dedicated carers. Thank you for your lovely messages of thanks and good wishes in response.

During the quarter, we bid farewell to Nicole, our Business Support Officer in the Tavi office. We welcomed Iona McDowall as a Business Support Officer in Tavistock and I know many of our carers have met with Iona at the Woodlands event and others have been busy getting their DBS renewal paperwork over to her! Iona has fitted in so well already and I am sure she will be an asset to TFF for many years to come.

We have also recently welcomed Ally Wiggins into the Exeter team. Ally is an accomplished social work practitioner and has already got involved in many of our internal forums and groups, contributing to an ever improving practice landscape here at TFF.

The long awaited office base for our Exeter region was identified in Cullompton last November. We have now transformed the office as it did need some TLC and I am so happy to announce that this office is now open. This is a central resource for all our regions and I hope that staff and carers will find this a convenient, central location to hold support groups or indeed to pop in and visit Molly our support worker who has a whole room dedicated to lots of fun activities for our young people.

By the time I write to you again, our All Carers Summer Forum would have taken place in Taunton on the 15th of June 2023. I hope that you can all make it to this event as we have arranged for Nick Barwick, a former carer leaver and now a successful entrepreneur to come and speak to you about his journey in the care system. I have personally had the privilege to hear Nick speak and I have to say that it was one of the most impactful couple of hours I have ever spent.

With my warmest wishes

Sabina Khan

CEO





HELPING CHILDREN IN CARE TELL THEIR STORY

How life story work can help children use their voice to explain their situation the way they want to

As they grow, fostered children will need to come to terms with how they have come into care. But how do they find the words to explain their story – to others and to themselves?

Life story work is an important part of fostering and can help enormously. What this looks like varies widely depending on the child's age and stage of emotional development and the child's ability to engage with the process, as well as religious and cultural background, gender, disability or educational needs. In most cases, it involves a sensitively written book or file that explains the reasons for a child's moves – including information about birth family members – and allows words, photos and even letters to be inserted and gradually shared at age-appropriate intervals and updated as the child grows.

Creating a memory box of memorabilia – old clothes, toys, photos, for example – can also be a lovely memory aid and a comfort for the child, as can a meaningful photo album created for the child, showing people and places special to the child.

Together these tools can be a great help for a looked after child to explore, understand and come to terms with their history.

Benefits of life story work

Working together with the young person, foster parents and social workers, even teachers and, in some cases, birth family members – often backed up by therapeutic support to help the child come to terms with distressing history – can help the child explore experiences, feelings and memories to understand what has happened in the past, explain and accept their present, and come to feel positive and hopeful about the future.

It can also be a powerful comfort for children who blame themselves for abuse or neglect experienced – very common in looked after children, say the experts.

Life story work is not only about helping children understand why they could not remain with their birth families; it also helps children come to terms with the realisation that their early life experience is not their fault and help them to grow in confidence and acceptance of their foster family.

Other benefits of life story work include:

- Building a sense of identity
- Giving clear details to build an understanding of their history
- Enabling a child to share their past with their current carers so they can better understand and develop empathy for the child and help with attachment
- To give a realistic, factual account of early events (children may harbour fantasies about their “perfect” birth family and this helps dispel that to help the child move on)
- To help the child understand how early negative experiences continue to affect them
- To acknowledge the separations and losses the child has experienced
- To enhance self-esteem and nurture a sense of security, comfort and permanency

Children who live with their birth families have many opportunities to know their past and to clarify past and present events. However, children separated from their birth families are often denied these opportunities; they may have changed families, social workers, schools, homes, and moved away from familiar neighbourhoods and communities. Children who lose track of their past and who are confused about the present, are likely to find it difficult to develop emotionally and socially.

But, done consistently and sensitively, life story work can help children separated from their birth families maintain a clear sense of their life journey and identity.





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Laying Foundations for the Future



Latest News By Region

Exeter Region

The Exeter region is growing fast and, as part of that expansion, we are excited to share with you news of our newest office, opening 11th April at 56-58 Fore Street, Collumpton EX15 1JT. The office is bright and vibrant and will be an additional space for carers and staff to use at will and for training and support groups. Most recently we held a support group nearby which was fantastically attended! As well as being a venue for formal 'stuff' there will also be a fully equipped play room available, for all children across our regions, where they can come and spend, pre-arranged time with our wonderful support worker Molly. Molly has been busily gathering lots and lots of fantastic toys, puzzles, games etc to fill the room in anticipation!

So pop along to see us, even if its just for coffee and cake to say hi 😊

Bristol Region

We really do have some phenomenal carers within TFF! To focus on the Bristol region for a moment then we have carers supporting young people with some complex health issues who deserve special recognition. These carers are selfless and committed to getting their young people the care that they need. I also want to acknowledge the carers who are working hard each day - focusing on the needs of their young people. Focusing on their individual journeys, considering the impact of the abuse that they have experienced on their development and the way that they view the world. Being the compassionate, caring, dedicated adults that our young people deserve and the ones that create lasting change! Keep being the positive change!

Tavistock Region

Again a big thank you to all the carers in the South West Team, this has been a period of significant challenge for some of our carers and children and as always, your commitment and tenacity is hugely valued and appreciated. Thank you.

We have seen 2 new Fostering Families join the South West region since January. I know you will join me in welcoming them to the Fostering Foundation and we look forward to getting seeing them at the support groups and various training and events. We also have another family from Cornwall going to panel later this month so things are looking very healthy on the Foster Carer recruitment front, which is great news.

We had a successful day out for our Fostering Families to Woodlands at half term. Although I was on holiday and could not attend, I received great feedback and it was lovely to know that a good time was had by all. We are holding our Summer Event at Camels Creek at Wadebridge on the 23rd August and more details will be sent out nearer the time.

We are also looking to re-introduce the individual male carer and female carer events which have been successful in previous years. We have a date for the female carers group (4th July) and it will take place at the Tavistock Office. For those who were around at the time, the event will have a similar theme to the last one with a 'pampering' at the fore. The male carers event is embryonic and we will bring you more details and a date as soon as we know more.

Again, the newsletter is an opportunity to note some of the achievements over the last couple of months. We are very proud to report that some of the young people are now making the transition to college and others are securing work experience, apprenticeships and full employment. Others are volunteering in the community and taking on additional responsibilities to help their peers at school. The Young People's Panel is going from strength to strength with a healthy co-hort from the South West region - so thank you everyone.



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YOUNG PEOPLES PARTICIPATION UPDATE

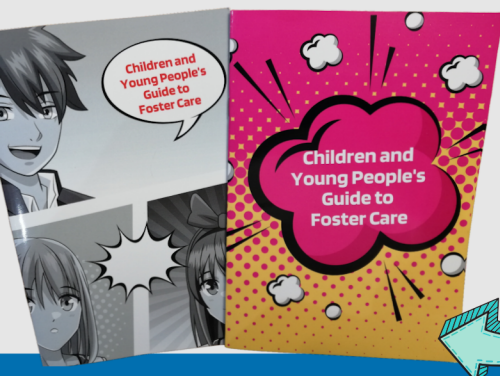
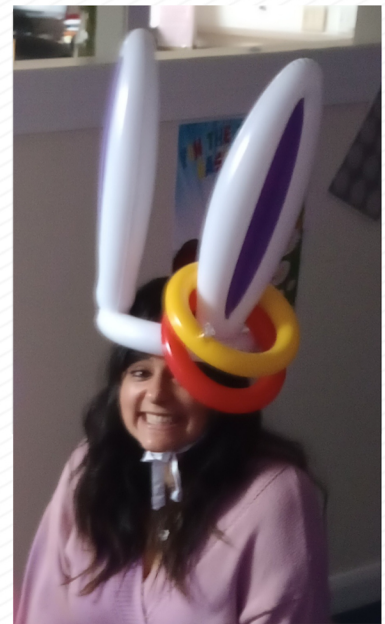
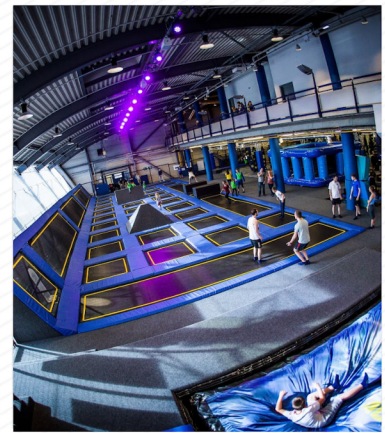
The last couple of months have been very proactive, with arrangements being made for summer events, numerous young people panel's being completed by the tenacious young people and virtual training completed by 7 young people from across the foundation who are now fully fledged panel members.

In April we were joined by 17 young people from the Southwest, where we bounced away a couple of hours at Adrenaline, followed by a competitive game of Bubble Football in Bristol! Needless to say that Noorie and I are feeling the results of the exercise!

Not only did we see great participation from the older young people we were also graced with lots of smiley faces at The Teddie's event held at the Tavistock Office. We danced away the hours to the latest tunes, played numerous party games, and ate our weight in glorious party food!

Donna kindly passed on her expertise with 'Young People Panel Training', which saw Tash and Donna deliver a 3-hour virtual training session on an early Saturday morning. We were both amazed by the young peoples professionalism, participation and inquisitive nature which stands them in very good stead for the future! We now have an amazing 16 young people trained, raring to quiz those due to panel!

On behalf of Noorie and I, thank you for encouraging the young people to attend the events and any other participation work that we may hold in the near future.



Latest guides created with the support of young people from TFF.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A YOUNG PERSON'S PANEL MEMBER.

This will require a short training session, followed by vouchers for each panel attended.

NDaniel@fosteringfoundation.co.uk



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Laying foundations for the future



Look at this amazing Easter bonnet created by a lovely young lady in Cornwall. We were blown away by your creative talents - well done.



UPCOMING EVENTS



EXTREME TEAM AND WOLPACK EVENT

OVER 3.5 HOURS OF TAG GAMES, FOOTBALL, DODGEBALL, HANDBALL, HOCKEY, VOLLYBALL CAPTURE THE FLAG, ULTIMATE FRISBEE AND SO MUCH MORE

FOLLOWED BY FISH AND CHIPS IN THE PARK

HORRABRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL
WEDNESDAY 9TH AUGUST 15.30- TBC

CARERS FORUM

ABOUT THE FORUM

10:30am to 10:45am: Meet and greet, welcome teas and coffees

10:45am to 11:00am: Maggie Kirwin and Nita Yeowell welcome and company update

11:00am to 13:00pm: Nick (Guest Speaker)
On the day you will be meeting a truly amazing individual called Nick Barwick. Nick is now a care experienced adult, after spending many years in care himself, and will talk candidly to you about his lived experiences during that time. Having previously heard Nick talk, we are confident you will find his presentation on the day both highly emotive and, equally, powerful. Nick now runs his own company and is a living embodiment of just how much a child in care can achieve their hopes and dreams.

13:00pm to 13:30pm: Lunch

13:30pm to 14:30pm: Carer consultation

14:30pm: Dispersal

ON THURSDAY 15TH JUNE 2023

HOLIDAY INN, TAUNTON TAI 2UA

START AT 10.30AM

MAGGIE KIRWIN
 ADM and Board Director

NITA YEOWELL
 Registered Manager

CLAIRE OAKLEY
 Southwest Team Manager

JIM WILLIS
 Bristol Team Manager

Please RSVP by Friday 31st March to communications@fosteringfoundation.co.uk

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UPCOMING
EVENTS

The
Fostering
Network

The Fostering Network is the UK's leading fostering charity, bringing together everyone who is involved in the lives of children and young people who are fostered to make foster care the very best it can be.

The Mortgage Brain webinar - remortgaging your home

Tuesday, 18 April, 2023

This webinar will look at the specifics of applying to remortgage your home as a foster carer.

Start time:

19:00

End time:

20:00

Location:

Zoom

Event type:

Membership events

Welcome & onboarding webinar

Thursday, 27 April, 2023

This is an opportunity for new members of The Fostering Network to learn about our membership benefits.

[Read more](#)

Start time:

11:00

End time:

12:00

Location:

Zoom - for foster carer members in England

Region:

England

Event type:

Membership events

Tax & national insurance webinar with Williams Giles Accountants

Thursday, 11 May, 2023

This webinar explains how to calculate any profit from fostering, how to complete your tax return and discusses national insurance options.

Start time:

19:30

End time:

20:30

Location:

Zoom

Event type:

Membership events

Foster Walk 2023

Saturday, 20 May, 2023

Foster Walk is back – and bigger than ever!

Our annual sponsored walk is a chance for everyone to get involved in raising awareness and funds for foster care in the UK.

[Read more](#)

Start time:

10:00

End time:

12:00

Location:

In your local community

MORE INFO 



<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/training-and-events>

REFER A
FRIEND

Do you have a family member or friend who is
interested in Fostering?

Look out for the new revised scheme.

DATES FOR 2023

Training events - Virtual and On-line 2023

Look out in your inbox for your invite from 'communications' to the training events scheduled for 2023

"As part of our commitment to provide an exemplary service both to yourselves and to the children and young people you support, we have made some changes to our mandatory training courses. The newer mandatory courses have been added after thorough research into what additional training is needed across the fostering spectrum, based on serious case reviews. You will all appreciate that, since Covid, we are seeing children coming into care with higher complexities and we, as an organisation are responding to that need"

Mandatory	Carers to complete?	When should this be completed?	Providers	Course name with provider
Safer Caring	All Carers	Every 3 years	Training Hub (online) Lilac Maison (virtual) Jacquie Spragg (virtual)	Risk Management and Safer Caring Fostering Safer Caring Safer Caring
First Aid Paediatric F2F	All Carers	Every 3 years	Triangle training (F2F) Acorn (F2F)	Emergency First Aid (Adult and Child) Adult and Paediatric Basic Life Support
First Aid Paediatric refresher	All Carers	Every year in the interim of the F2F training	Training Hub (online)	First Aid Paediatric Fostering
Safeguarding Children F2F	All Carers	Every 3 years	Jaquie Spragg (Virtual)	Safeguarding in the Context of Foster Care (CP)
Safeguarding Children refresher	All Carers	Every year in the interim of the F2F training	Training Hub (online)	Safeguarding Children Advanced Level Fostering
De-escalation F2F	All Carers	Every 3 years	Dynamis (F2F)	Managing Challenging Behaviors in the home
Safeguarding Adults	P&C Carers only	Every 3 years	Training Hub (online)	Safeguarding Adults Level 2 Fostering
Equality and Diversity	All Carers	Every 3 years	Training Hub (online) Lilac Maison (virtual)	Equality and Diversity and Cultural Competence Fostering Equality and Diversity
Radicalisation and Prevention	All Carers	Every 3 years	Training Hub (online)	Radicalisation and Extremism Fostering
Administering Medication	All Carers	Every 3 years	Training Hub (online)	Medication Advanced Fostering
Safe Sleeping	P&C Carers only	Every 3 years	Training Hub (online)	Safer Sleeping for babies in Early Years
P&C	P&C Carers only	Every 3 years	Training Hub (online)	Parent and Child Arrangements Fostering

DON'T FORGET!

SUPPORT GROUP DATES AND LOCATIONS – CAN NOW BE FOUND ON
WWW.FOSTERINGFOUNDATION.CO.UK