



the
Fostering
Foundation

Laying Foundations for the Future

DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

End of Year Message from our CEO - Sakina Khan

As 2024 draws to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible achievements of The Fostering Foundation (TFF) over the past year. Together, we've reached milestones that speak volumes about our shared commitment to creating a brighter future for children and young people.

This year, we took a significant step in supporting our dedicated staff team by launching critical injury and long-term sickness insurance to cover all TFF staff. This initiative reflects our belief in safeguarding the well-being of those who work tirelessly to make all of this possible. To each and every member of TFF staff – you have my absolute admiration.

In one of our proudest moments of 2024, we successfully placed a young person from a residential home into their forever home with our remarkable foster carers through our Step Forward initiative with Blue Elephant Children's Homes. This achievement underscores the transformative power of fostering and the life-changing outcomes we aim to achieve every day.

We also had the privilege of welcoming 10 new foster carer households into The Fostering Foundation Family. Each new household brings with it hope, warmth, and the potential to provide safe and loving environments for children who need them most.

To strengthen our support systems further, we onboarded an entire Therapeutic Team dedicated to enhancing the resources and guidance available to both foster carers and young people. This addition ensures that we can continue to provide holistic care and address the complex needs of those we serve.

In line with our growth and dedication to excellence, we created a new Service Manager position within the organization and promoted our very own Lindsay Penney to this role. This role is pivotal in bolstering in-house support and ensuring robust compliance monitoring, enabling us to maintain the highest standards across all aspects of our work.

We also welcomed a new Registered Manager, Jo Killick, whose boundless energy and determination have already begun to steer us toward heights we could only dream of before. Jo's vision and drive will undoubtedly shape the future of TFF in exciting ways.

Our fostering panel also gained new leadership this year, with the arrival of a new Panel Chair who brings a wealth of experience in children's advocacy and a Vice Chair who is deeply familiar with TFF's ethos, having served as a Registered Manager with us in the past. Their expertise and dedication ensure our strategic direction remains firmly focused on the best interests of children and young people.

While 2024 was a year of welcoming new faces, we also bid a fond farewell to a valued team member who retired after 11.5 years of service. Their commitment and contributions have left an indelible mark on TFF, and we wish them all the best in their well-earned retirement.

As we look ahead to 2025, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering dedication of our foster carers, staff, and everyone who contributes to the success of The Fostering Foundation. Together, we are building a legacy of care, compassion, and transformational change for the children and young people we support. Thank you for being an integral part of this journey.

Wishing you all a joyful holiday season and a prosperous new year.

Warm regards,

Sakina Khan

CEO, The Fostering Foundation





How to manage challenging times at Christmas

Christmas can be a challenging time of the year, for children who have experienced trauma. It is important to be aware of potential triggers related to past trauma and strive to minimize them, creating positive memories where possible. ***The below tips from Dr. Leanne Johnson, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, can help support.***

Create a Warm and Welcoming Environment: Let children know regularly how special they are and what an important part of the community they are. For example, photos and artwork being on display. Surprise them with subtle random acts of kindness to show you are keeping them in mind.

Create Special Memories: Create memories together, giving children choice about what they would like to do. Taking photos and other ways to record these memories to look back on is important.

Communicate Openly: Encourage open conversations about their feelings and expectations for Christmas, ensuring they have a voice in the plans. Some children will want to really celebrate it, others may not – individual needs and requests need to be supported.

Foster Connections: Facilitate meaningful connections with supportive individuals, whether it's friends, family, or community members, to reinforce a sense of belonging. Do not force connections, only positively encourage them and respect the child's view.

Establish Predictability: Maintain routines and clearly communicate any changes in advance to help reduce anxiety and uncertainty. For schools prepare children for the end of term and transitioning to a new school year.

Offer Choices: Allow children to participate in decision-making regarding holiday activities, respecting their preferences and comfort levels.

Provide Coping Strategies: Equip children with regulating strategies, such as deep breathing exercises or creative outlets, to manage during the holiday season.

Celebrate in a Low-Pressure Manner: Keep festivities low-key, focusing on enjoyable and non-stressful activities to avoid overwhelm.

Respect Boundaries: Recognise and respect children's need for personal space and downtime, allowing them to engage in holiday celebrations at their own pace.

Reflect Together: As a team – what is working well, what is challenging? What do we need to change or tweak? Try to stay ahead of supporting.

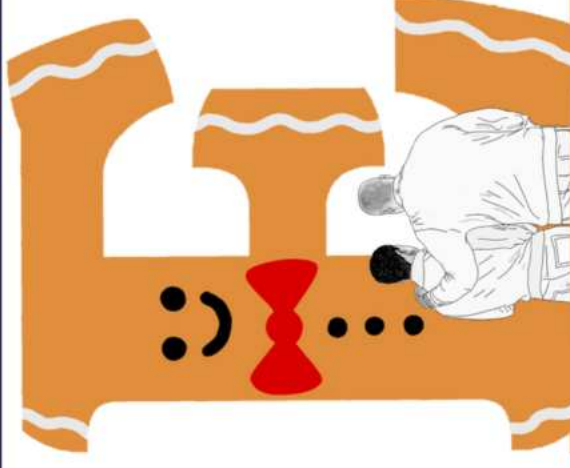
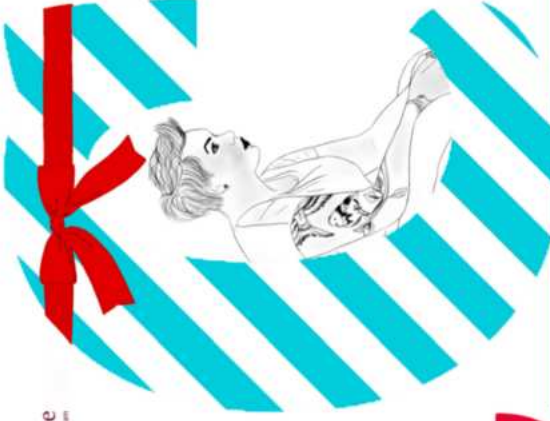
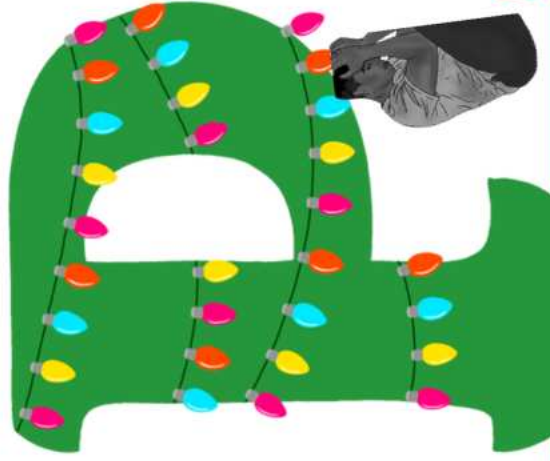
Seek Professional Support: If needed contact the out of hours service to provide additional guidance and support during the holiday season.

Importantly of all – make sure you work to recognise the impact of working with trauma on you – do not forget to care for self.



The Power of PACE at Christmas Time

There are a lot of feelings flying around at Christmas time for children and adults alike. Finding the right balance for YOU is something to work towards. PACE can help. PACE - Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy



Beacon House
Therapeutic Services and Trauma Team

Playfulness isn't the same as playing but is enjoying time with someone else or yourself in an unconditional way.

This can look like a 5 minute sofa snuggle with someone, walking hand in hand, swapping cringey cracker joke or even taking yourself off for a cry on your own if that's where you're at and trying to leave behind any guilt about it.

It's about showing a real interest in someone, or yourself, and finding something you really enjoy about them - or you. Even if that's 2 minutes alone with yourself outside the front door!

Acceptance means sitting with strong emotions or perspective of another and knowing that you might not be able to take these away. There may be no words of advice to give, strategies to implement or thoughts to share, only comfort by offering your safe presence.

It is allowing uncomfortable sensations and emotions to be in your own body without judgement. Accepting their existence.

For an example of this and Empathy, watch the YouTube clip called 'Bené Brown on Empathy' or find inspiration from the song 'Hold Space' by Ward Thomas.

Curiosity isn't about asking "why?" even when this is exactly what we want to know! It's about wondering what is going on inside for someone or ourself.

It's about taking the risk of being wrong *"Can I share my ideas with you... I wonder if... I might be wrong, so tell me if I am, but here are my thoughts..."*

A way of letting someone know that your mind is on their mind and genuinely interested in anything at all that's going on in there without judgement.

It is practising this same non-judgemental curiosity within ourselves.

Empathy can take a lot of energy at Christmas. Sitting with the disappointment of a child who hasn't got the gift they hoped for *"I can see the sadness in your eyes that it's not what you wanted"* or accepting our own disappointment that the time hasn't felt very festive *"I am where I am and things are how they are and I'm going to do my best to feel okay with that"*.

A top tip is try to move away from reassurance or denial of feelings - others or your own. Naming what is happening for ourselves or another helps us in our offering of empathy.

To PACE oneself: "To do something at a speed that is steady and that allows one to continue without becoming too tired."



Festive
celebrations

2024

Merry
Christmas
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

FF the
Fostering
Foundation
Laying Foundations for the Future

Support Group DATES

2025

Reminder: As part of the TFF Contract all carers are expected to attend a minimum of 3 support groups per year. This can be a combination of virtual or in person.

(R) = facilitated in person by Rich (Lead Therapeutic Practitioner). Please note: For those carers who usually attend Plymouth and Bodmin support groups, please make your way to the Tavistock Office on the given dates if you wish to attend a session led by Rich.

EXETER SUPPORT GROUP

The Kenn Centre, 3 Exeter Road,
Kennford, Exeter, EX6 7UE

08/01/2025 - 10:00 to 12:30
05/02/2025 - 10:00 to 12:30 (R)
05/03/2025 - 10:00 to 12:30
02/04/2025 - 10:00 to 12:30
07/05/2025 - 10:00 to 12:30 (R)
04/06/2025 - 10:00 to 12:30
02/07/2025 - 10:00 to 12:30
10/09/2025 - 10:00 to 12:30
01/10/2025 - 10:00 to 12:30 (R)
05/11/2025 - 10:00 to 12:30

PLYMOUTH SUPPORT GROUP

The Ploughboy, 60 Liskeard Road,
Saltash, PL12 4HG

23/01/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
20/02/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
20/03/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
17/04/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
22/05/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
19/06/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
17/07/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
18/09/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
23/10/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
20/11/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00

TAVISTOCK SUPPORT GROUP

46-47 Brook Street, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 0HE

13/02/2025 - 11:00 to 1:00 (R)
08/05/2025 - 11:00 to 1:00 (R)
09/10/2025 - 11:00 to 1:00 (R)

BODMIN SUPPORT GROUP

Bodmin Nursery, Laveddon Mill,
Bodmin, PL30 5JU

14/01/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
11/03/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
17/06/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
16/09/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00
04/11/2025 - 10:00 to 12:00

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2025

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(R) = facilitated in person by Rich (Lead Therapeutic Practitioner)

BRISTOL SUPPORT GROUP

74A Regent St, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 8JA

14/01/2025 - 10:00 to 11:30	15/07/2025 - 10:00 to 11:30
12/02/2025 - 10:00 to 11:30	17/09/2025 - 10:00 to 11:30
13/03/2025 - 10:00 to 11:30 (R)	16/10/2025 - 10:00 to 11:30
15/04/2025 - 10:00 to 11:30	13/11/2025 - 10:00 to 11:30 (R)
14/05/2025 - 10:00 to 11:30	18/11/2025 - 10:00 to 11:30
12/06/2025 - 10:00 to 11:30 (R)	12/12/2025 - 12:00 to 14:00 – Location TBC

THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT GROUP (VIRTUAL)

Virtual - Facilitated by Donna (Therapeutic Practitioner)

09/01/2025 - 10:00 - Zoom (virtual)	09/10/2025 - 10:00 - Zoom (virtual)
16/01/2025 - 18:00 - Zoom (virtual)	16/10/2025 - 18:00 - Zoom (virtual)
13/02/2025 - 10:00 - Zoom (virtual)	13/11/2025 - 10:00 - Zoom (virtual)
20/02/2025 - 18:00 - Zoom (virtual)	20/11/2025 - 18:00 - Zoom (virtual)
13/03/2025 - 10:00 - Zoom (virtual)	
20/03/2025 - 18:00 - Zoom (virtual)	
10/04/2025 - 10:00 - Zoom (virtual)	
17/04/2025 - 18:00 - Zoom (virtual)	
08/05/2025 - 10:00 - Zoom (virtual)	
15/05/2025 - 18:00 - Zoom (virtual)	
12/06/2025 - 10:00 - Zoom (virtual)	
19/06/2025 - 18:00 - Zoom (virtual)	
10/07/2025 - 10:00 - Zoom (virtual)	
17/07/2025 - 18:00 - Zoom (virtual)	
11/09/2025 - 10:00 - Zoom (virtual)	
18/09/2025 - 18:00 - Zoom (virtual)	

BETTER TOGETHER

Can you help us find more amazing foster carers to help another young person in need?



The demand for foster carers is growing, and we're exploring creative ways to inspire others to join this incredible journey, just like you have!

Would you be willing to help us spread the word by using magnetic car signs or placing a 12x12cm sticker in your car window?

Imagine, while you're in traffic or driving around, you could be making a huge difference by encouraging others to learn more about fostering.



Application complete
YOU Receive £150

Approved by panel
YOU Receive £500

Placememnt made
YOU Receive £500