

Start your Fostering journey here !



Check out our website at:

[www.wirralfostering.org](http://www.wirralfostering.org)

And complete an enquiry form

Call Admin on 0151 666 4616

Or email

[fosteringadmin@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:fosteringadmin@wirral.gov.uk)



## What is fostering?

We offer a range of types of fostering to suit your lifestyle, along with ongoing training and a great support package.

There is a huge variety and diversity in the children and young people who need a safe and loving home upon Wirral and we aim to reflect this in our foster carers.



We need loving homes for children of all ages up to 18 years, including babies and toddlers, older children and teenagers, sometimes for brothers and sisters who need to stay together.

Some children have special needs, these could be physical disabilities and/or learning difficulties and need special care.

Children from different backgrounds may have special requirements and have particular cultural or religious needs.



## Types of Fostering

### Short Term

Short term foster carer may involve looking after a child on an emergency basis for as short as an overnight stay or having a child with you for a few months or even a year or two, before they return home or move onto a more permanent home. By providing short term foster care you can give a child in an unsettled situation the security they need and the time they need it most.

### Long Term

Being a permanent carer for a child or young person essentially means they live with you until they reach independence, but unlike adoption, the legal powers regarding the child or young person will remain with the local authority.

### Sibling Groups and Teenagers

We need homes for children of all ages up to 18 years, but there is a consistent need for foster carers to look after sibling groups for whom the security and comfort of staying together in a foster home is essential. It is so important to keep sibling's together where possible. This means providing a stable family environment for children, often for older children and teenagers, who cannot live with their birth families.

### Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities

Short breaks care helps to relieve the pressure on parents and families caring for children with disabilities and / or health conditions. As a short break carer, you become a partner family to a child and their family, supporting them by caring for the child overnight on an agreed programme (e.g. one weekend per month). This means it's an ideal area of care for people who work full-time or have limited free time.

## Respite

Respite care involves looking after children on a short term basis, who are already placed with foster carers to give 'respite' or a short break to their carers. It is an ideal type of fostering for anyone who would like to foster but is (maybe initially) unable to commit to a long term placement due to limited free time. It gives the opportunity to benefit from all the same training and support as full-time foster carers, without having to commit to long term placements.

Respite care is flexible and can vary from one-off emergency placements to a regular arrangement, where you support a child and foster family on an ongoing basis.

## Parent & Child

Foster Carer(s) will be expected to offer guidance and assistance to the parent in managing the care tasks for the child. This may include direct instruction or modelling, it may include responding to questions, or it may include practical support such as accompanying the parent to Parent and Baby Groups, Health Visiting Clinic, shopping, etc.

Foster Carer(s) will be expected to show the parent how any technical appliances work so that they are able to use cooking and cleaning facilities appropriately. If the placement progresses positively, it must be expected that the parent demonstrates less reliance on the Foster Carers support.



## How to become a Foster Carer

**If you decide you'd like to become a foster carer, we'll support you at every stage of the process. The assessment process usually takes between 3 and 4 months, and is very much a two-way process, where we learn a lot from each other. The thoroughness of the process ensures that everyone has enough information to achieve the best possible experience and outcomes for you, and the children you'll be caring for.**

**When you decide the time is right for you to proceed, we'll have a very informal chat over the phone to find out more about you and answer any questions you have.**

### Initial Visit

Our initial visits normally involve one of our team coming to see you at home to talk more in depth about the process, your thoughts around fostering and what's involved. We'll provide all the information you need about the application process so you know what to expect. We are also able to conduct initial visits online via teams etc. to ensure we can still support people through the process.

### Pre-approval Training

Part of the assessment includes a 3 day training course, to give you a real insight into what being a foster carer is like. During 'Skills to Foster' you'll hear from other foster carers and young people in care. It is also a great opportunity to meet others going through the application process and learn and prepare in a supportive group environment. Many of our foster carers are still in touch with people they met on their training days!

## Assessment

At this stage, your assessing social worker will work with you to complete the application form (you may hear it referred to as a Form F). They will guide you through the process and talk in more detail about a variety of things like; your family, life experiences, work history, interests and skills and anything that will help us better understand the type of children you feel you would be best suited to fostering.

Family members, friends and your nominated support network are also be contacted at this point. We also complete all the necessary police and medical checks and obtain references.

## Panel

Once your application is completed, we'll send you a copy in advance of you attending a fostering panel along with your social worker (it's not as scary as it sounds!).

This is where a group of independent professionals review and discuss your application with you, before making a recommendation regarding your approval as a foster carer.

## Approval !

Once you are approved we'll soon be in touch about children who we need foster carers for, who we think would be a suitable match for you, as well as discussing any initial training you'd like to go on.

*Then it won't be long before you're welcoming a child or young person into your home!*

**FOSTER**

Wirral Council

For children. For carers. For support.

Visit [foster4.co.uk](https://foster4.co.uk) or give the team a call on  
0345 646 0098 or email [enquiry@foster4.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@foster4.co.uk)