

*Just
imagine...*

CHANGING A FUTURE FOREVER...



FOSTERING HANDBOOK



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WELCOME TO PROGRESS

We are a small family run fostering agency with a focus on providing high quality placements for vulnerable children with disabilities, complex medical needs and learning difficulties.

With over 17 years of experience our dedicated team are here to support you at every stage, if you have any questions about the information provided in this booklet or fostering in general please get in touch with us today.



TRANSFORMING A LIFE...

WHAT IS FOSTERING?

Fostering is opening your home to provide a safe place for a child or young person in need of understanding, love, care and support. It's not always easy. The child you're caring for will often see things very differently from you and may resist your attempts to reach out to them.

The challenge of fostering is to keep building those bridges so that you can provide the stable family environment that all children need to feel safe and secure.

The length of time a child will stay with a Foster Carer will depend on their individual circumstances. It could be for just a few nights, or placements can be made until a child reaches the age of 18 and is ready for independence.



FOSTERING AS A CAREER

We're always looking for Foster Carers who can provide intensive support for children, including those with disabilities and additional needs. Fostering is more than a career, it's a lifestyle. By opening up your home and your heart to a child in need, you could be making an important difference in many people's lives.

Fostering isn't for everyone. But if you feel you have that special ability to change a child's future for the better, we'll make sure you always have the support you need. If you're interested in becoming a Foster Carer, enquire today and start your fostering journey with us.



At Progress we recognise and support the needs of each individual child. There are many reasons why a young person may be fostered and we want to make sure we have foster carers that understand the different types of foster placements they can take.

With careful matching and being mindful of your family we can help you decide what type of fostering would suit you.

"I had never been on holiday before, my foster family took me to Spain- I loved it."

TYPES OF FOSTERING

SHORT-TERM

A temporary placement whilst future plans for the child/ young person(s) are confirmed. Often, the placements have little advanced warning and can last from a few days to a few months.

LONG-TERM

Usually a pre-planned placement where a child or young person joins a foster family, and receives a stable home environment until they are ready to be independent.

SOLO CARE

Solo care is providing care for an individual child. This child needs one on one attention, and often requires a two parent family.

SHORT BREAKS

Providing a regular break for a disabled child, giving parents or foster carers a break from the day to day care and responsibilities.

OUR FRIENDLY TEAM WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU...

You can give us a call on 01902 561066 from 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday, or if you would like a call back, let us know via email at:

fostering@progresscare.co.uk

or fill in one of our quick enquiry forms on our website at:

www.progresscare.co.uk/fostering

SPECIALISMS

Just as there are different types of fostering, there are also specialisms within fostering that provide intensive support to children with specific needs and life experiences.

DISABILITY & COMPLEX NEEDS

Our specialist social workers support our carers to provide care for children with a wide range of disabilities.

MENTAL HEALTH

Fostering a child with poor mental health can include working together with the appropriate mental health services to support a child with a range of different behaviours such as self-harming, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety and psychotic episodes.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Fostering a child who is vulnerable to sexual exploitation and may have experienced some form of exploitation. Progress offers specialist training to support children and young people in this area.

THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE

Our therapeutic social workers empower and enable foster carers to work therapeutically with children and young people alongside our therapeutic consultant.

PARENT & CHILD

A stable, safe and supportive family life which promotes and nurtures the parental skills of a young parent and their baby.



FAQ: WHAT IS SPECIALIST FOSTER CARER?

A 'specialist foster carer' is a term used to describe someone who cares for a child with one or more of the following issues: Learning disabilities, Physical disabilities and other medical conditions, Children with poor mental health, Children who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, Children who display emotional and behavioural difficulties. Progress welcomes professionals from the health and social care sector who can offer specialist care because of their professional experience.

FAQ: I HAVE NO EXPERIENCE IN SPECIALIST FOSTER CARE, WILL THIS PREVENT ME FROM BECOMING A FOSTER CARER?

Many of our current specialist foster carers did not have the skills and experience initially. Progress will offer the right training programmes and support to enable you to improve and widen your skills so that you can offer specialist care.

"I'm the same as every other child, I'm just obviously not with my real mum and dad, & that's fine with me."



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SPECIALIST SUPPORT, WHEN YOU NEED IT...

Progress knows there are often misconceptions about fostering. We have put together a few frequently asked questions to help you along your journey.

"It's the little things that really help a child progress"

FOSTERING FAQ'S

DO I NEED TO OWN MY OWN HOME TO BECOME A FOSTER CARER? No. The only requirement for becoming a foster carer is that you have a spare bedroom. However, if you are renting a property we require written permission from your landlord giving permission to foster in their property.

I AM SINGLE, CAN I BECOME A FOSTER CARER?

We welcome applications from single carers. However, in order to become a specialist foster carer, you may need to give up work and therefore require financial stability. You will also need to evidence a strong existing support network.

ARE THERE ANY AGE RESTRICTIONS TO BECOMING A FOSTER CARER?

There is no legal minimum or maximum age to becoming a foster carer although Progress requires a person to be over the age of 21 to foster. Progress considers and assesses each individual on their own merits and suitability. Progress will consider life experiences and a level of maturity in addition to your suitability to foster.

I AM NOT A PARENT, CAN I BECOME A FOSTER CARER?

It is not essential to have parenting skills prior to becoming a foster carer. However, knowledge and experience of looking after children will need to be proven during the assessment process and this can be evidenced if you have previously worked with children or have a wide range of experience in caring for family members. Progress can also offer extensive training in order for you to up-skill in areas that may be required.

MORE FAQ'S ON THE NEXT PAGE...



DO I GET PAID FOR BEING A FOSTER CARER? Yes. Progress pay a very competitive package for each child placed with you. The amount varies dependent on the age and skills required for each child. Specialist care attracts a higher reward due to the additional demands of the child. Children who have additional needs also have allocated support packages in addition to their monthly maintenance payment.

I'M IN A SAME SEX RELATIONSHIP, CAN I BECOME A FOSTER CARER? Yes. This is not a barrier to fostering. Any application to foster involving 2 people in a relationship necessitates a joint application, and therefore serious contemplation, along with evidence of stability and commitment.

FOSTERING FAQ'S

CAN I BE A FOSTER CARER IF ENGLISH IS NOT MY FIRST LANGUAGE? Some children in foster care do not communicate using English as their first language and being placed in a home where their first language is spoken is very beneficial to them and can make the transition easier. However, as you will be working with a team of professionals around the child or children, it is essential that you have an adequate level of spoken and written English to enable you to do this and to support the child's educational development.

DO I HAVE TO GIVE UP WORK TO BECOME A FOSTER CARER? This will depend on your individual circumstances, the type of fostering you wish to consider and the flexibility your employment can offer. Specialist foster care requires at least one full-time carer at home. All types of foster care require you to transport a child to and from school and to attend various meetings with professionals. If you're unsure, contact us for a more in-depth discussion.

I HAVE CHILDREN AT HOME, WILL THIS IMPACT ON MY ABILITY TO BECOME A FOSTER CARER? Having your own children does not affect your ability to foster. However, the age of your own children will impact on the decisions about the placements that you can receive and the types of fostering that you can offer. Some local authorities have specific restrictions whereby they will not place a child who is 2 years older or younger than your own. This needs to be a consideration when becoming a foster carer.

"Whether you phone at 11pm, or 2am in the morning, there is always someone on hand to help. Progress is just like one big family!"

MORE FAQ'S ON THE NEXT PAGE...



FOSTERING FAQ'S

HOW WILL THIS AFFECT MY OWN CHILDREN? If you have children, we will need to explore with them how they will feel and cope with sharing their parents with other children. If you have school age children, you may need to consider how you will be able to transport your children to school as well as a foster child, who may attend a different school to your own.

I HAVE A STRONG FAITH, DOES THIS CREATE A BARRIER TO FOSTERING? Having a faith does not affect your application to foster. Children need to be placed with foster families that can meet their needs, including their religious needs. However, you do need to consider how you would feel about caring for a child who does not share your religious beliefs. If you only wish to care for children who are sympathetic to your faith, we can discuss this. Knowing what you can offer is better than believing you can't, and not offering at all.

I AM UNEMPLOYED, CAN I BECOME A FOSTER CARER? As a foster carer, you are self-employed. Foster carers benefit from generous tax relief. During the assessment process, you would still be entitled to benefits but would need to continue looking for employment if this is a requirement of the job-centre.

CAN I FOSTER IF I HAVE A LONG-TERM HEALTH PROBLEM OR DISABILITY? A full medical is undertaken as part of your initial assessment to determine your suitability to foster. Being healthy is an important part of fostering as caring for children is physically and emotionally demanding.



I AM CURRENTLY FOSTERING WITH ANOTHER AGENCY AND WISH TO TRANSFER TO PROGRESS, CAN I DO THIS? Progress welcomes both new and existing foster carers. If you are interested in joining our team and you already have a child in place, we can discuss the possibility of the child or children transferring across with you, with the relevant Local Authority.

TRANSFERRING TO PROGRESS

Are you looking for more training or would you like to specialise in a certain type of fostering? Progress are able to offer bespoke packages that will support your transition, give us a call today and find out what this could look like for your family.



We hope you found our FAQ's helpful, however if you do have any questions we are happy to have an informal chat at a time that is convenient for you.

You can give us a call on 01902 561066 from 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday, or if you would like a call back, let us know via email: fostering@progresscare.co.uk

"When I visit, I walk into a lovely, caring, emotionally warm home - it's a family home."

FOSTERING FAQ'S

I HAVE A CRIMINAL RECORD, WILL I BE ABLE TO BECOME A FOSTER CARER? All applicants are required to carry out an enhanced police check during the assessment process. Not all criminal convictions will prevent you from being able to foster and should be discussed with Progress during the enquiry stage. However, applicants with any history of sexual offences or cruelty to children will not be considered.

HOW LONG WILL THE PROCESS TAKE TO BECOME A FOSTER CARER? The length of the assessment is completely dependent on you and how flexible you can be in terms of attending the initial training course and attending appointments with your designated social worker. We normally suggest around 6 months from enquiry through to panel but it can take up to 8 months.

DO I NEED SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS TO FOSTER? No. Once approved, each carer will complete an induction and personal development plan to identify your developmental needs. Over the first 12 months you will also work through the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care. Progress will also plan training courses to meet the needs of each individual carer.

I AM A SMOKER, WILL THIS PREVENT ME FROM BECOMING A FOSTER CARER? Smoking and passive smoking carries significant risks to children and will be considered during the initial assessment process. Most local authorities will not consider placing a child under the age of 5 with a smoker in the household. Smoking around foster children is prohibited.



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imagine...

KNOWING HOW YOUR JOURNEY WILL BEGIN...

You don't need any particular qualifications or experience to change a life. The most important things you can possess are patience and the desire to change a young person's life for the better.

"We recognise what a huge decision becoming a foster carer can be, Progress makes the journey as straight forward as possible."

STEP 1 - ENQUIRY & VISIT REQUEST

Contact us via phone, email or our website. Once we've received your enquiry we'll send you an information pack, and a member of the Progress team will contact you to discuss the process.

STEP 2 - HOME VISIT

We'll pay you a visit to learn more about you, your family and your home. It's also an opportunity for you to ask us questions in person. If you're happy to proceed, we'll complete the paperwork required to get the process started.

STEP 3 - SKILLS TO FOSTER & FORM F

You'll be invited to attend a mandatory Skills to Foster training course that provides important information and will give you an insight into what to expect as a foster carer. Once you've successfully completed the course, you'll be allocated a Social Worker who will begin your Form F Assessment. This is an in-depth information gathering process that will be submitted to an independent Fostering Panel.

STEP 4 - FOSTERING PANEL

Along with your Social Worker, you'll be invited to attend the Fostering Panel, who will assess your suitability and make a recommendation of your approval.

STEP 5 - PROGRESS INDUCTION

Once approved by the panel, you'll be allocated a Supervising Social Worker. You will then undertake an induction to provide you with the resources available to begin your role as a Foster Carer with Progress.

STEP 6 - MATCH PLACEMENT

Progress will notify all the relevant Local Authorities that you are available to foster. We'll then work closely with you to match your first placement. Progress provides a professional career path with full training and support to build your Fostering skills and continue your development in a range of areas.



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Wolverhampton, WV4 6JG

Call: 01902 561066

Email: fostering@progresscare.co.uk
Visit: www.progresscare.co.uk/fostering