

# APPLICATION PROCESS – How do I become a foster carer?

Becoming a foster carer can take between 4 and 6 months. It is a decision not to be taken lightly and you may want to take some time to think about it. We also have a duty to make sure that you are right for the looked after children. See below for the different stages of the application process.

## Stage one: Initial Enquiry & Home visit

The first step is to have a conversation. Once you have expressed an interest we will arrange a 'Home Visit'. The 'Home Visit' will provide the opportunity for you to meet someone who has previously been a foster carer

## Stage two: Checks

You will need to complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS), provide us with references and complete a medical assessment. A member at 5Fostering will be available to guide you through every step of the process.

## Stage three: Assessment

At this stage references will be followed up and referees interviewed by our specialist social workers. You and your family will also have in-depth 1:1 interviews that explore parenting skills. But, don't worry it is not as intense as it sounds! We just want to find out about your attitude towards parenting and your parenting skills, how ready your house is and you and your families' overall approach towards fostering.

## Stage four: Skills to foster Training

We are very keen on reflective practice and training for all our carers. Training will continue throughout your career with 5Fostering, although it is particularly important during the approval process. The induction 'Skills to Foster' programme is a short two-day course (or 4 x half days) that gives carers an insight into fostering. You will have the chance to meet other applicants and your experienced trainers will be there to answer all your questions.

## Stage five: The Panel

Your application will be presented to a panel who will make a recommendation on the day. They may ask you a few extra questions. They are a group of people from different backgrounds including education, social work, people previously fostered, foster carers etc. This will then be passed onto a decision maker who will make a formal recommendation

## Stage six: Approval

Once approved, you will become a 5Fostering carer. You will be assigned a 5Fostering Social Worker who will regularly meet with you and support you in your role looking after children and young people.