

Become a Fostering Friendly Employer



- Champion children in your communities
- Empower your employees
- Develop your business

**Fostering
Friendly**

The Fostering Network

Fostering
SOUTH WEST

Children and young people urgently need foster families to remain in their communities

Every 20 minutes another child goes into care. The number of children in need of care is continually growing, with over 83,000 children being looked after in 2023.

This rising demand means that an estimated one in five children looked after in England are living more than 20 miles away from their home, family, school, and community.

Foster families give children unable to live with their birth family the care and stability they need to grow.

Recruiting more foster carers and supporting the ones already fostering for their local council means more children are able to stay connected to the people and places that matter.

By becoming a fostering friendly employer, you can make a significant impact on these children's lives and support the foster carers among your workforce.



Who are Fostering South West?

Fostering South West represents a partnership between the 15 local councils across the south west of England.

For the first time, fostering services in the region are collaborating to recruit essential new foster carers and improve retention via the Mockingbird programme.

In 2022, the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and the Competition and Markets Authority called for action to recruit more foster carers due to a longstanding shortage of suitable homes. The review highlighted the need for dedicated foster carers to support teenagers, siblings, and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

The Government's response to the report, 'Stable Homes, Built on Love', was a strategy and commitment to improve fostering recruitment and retention and invested £36 million over 3 years.

On 29th April 2024 Fostering South West was successfully launched. The partner local councils we are working with are:

B&NES, Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole, Cornwall & IoS, Bristol, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Plymouth, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon, Torbay, Wiltshire.

What is the Fostering Friendly Employer scheme?

It allows businesses of any size to positively impact foster carers and the children in their communities, while creating opportunities for supporting the workforce and in turn boosting productivity.

According to the Fostering Network, about 40% of foster carers juggle fostering with full-time or part-time jobs. Supportive employers can make a significant impact, enabling them to balance work and childcare.

The scheme, founded by The Fostering Network, helps employers support foster carers without any direct costs. Members agree to implement a fostering-friendly HR policy, offering flexible working hours and paid time off for training and settling new children into their homes.



What's in it for you?



Build your brand and demonstrate your commitment to caring for staff and the local community



Understand and support your employees needs and improve staff wellbeing



Be an attractive employer for foster carers



Play a vital role in recruiting and supporting foster carers



Engage and inspire staff with learning events



Benefit from the expertise of the UK's leading fostering charity



Be a part of the national celebration of foster care and its amazing stories



Ready to join the fostering friendly community?

Get in touch with the team at FosteringFriendly@fostering.net – they are here to help you all the way.

1. They will send you a template policy and help you develop your own
2. They will approve your new policy and help promote your new status
3. Their team will support you to take part in Foster Care Fortnight
4. They can help to engage, inform, and inspire your employees

Becoming Fostering Friendly is the beginning of a partnership. They will work with you to find simple ways to meet your shared goals together.



Don't just take our word for it!

“

Working for a fostering friendly employer has been a game-changer for my family.

The flexibility and understanding I receive allow me to provide the best care for the children in my home while maintaining my professional commitments.

It's heartening to know my workplace supports me in making a positive difference in these young lives.

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A foster carer working for a fostering friendly employer



Not sure that you are able to fully commit to being a fostering friendly employer?

Don't worry, there are still lots of ways you and your company can help!

How else can our company support fostering?

-  Display fostering materials in your offices
-  Host an information event for your staff
-  Share a fostering story in your company newsletter or on your social media
-  Donate gifts to your local council fostering service

Contact us to find out the contact details of your local council's fostering service.



Why support people to foster with a south west local council?

We're working together to change the lives of children and young people in care across the south west.



Our mission

There are babies, toddlers, teenagers, siblings and young parents all across our region who need us, and need you too.

Their stories are unique, but for every single child our mission is the same: to create a better future and help shape positive outcomes.



Our Community

Foster carers support our communities by helping children to stay closer to home when it is safe for them to do so. With the recruitment of more foster carers, children will be able to remain in the south west, nearer to familiar surroundings.

Children and young people won't need to wait as long for the right home to meet their needs or a place where they can stay without being separated from their brothers and sisters.

Why support people to foster with a south west local council?



Our Support

We are the complete local support network around foster carers, supporting them and the children in the care of our local councils. As part of our collaboration, we've stepped up support for all foster carers – from first enquiry through to overcoming challenges and developing the skills for progression.

Wherever someone's fostering future takes them, we'll be beside them every step of the way with all the dedicated expertise, advice and training they'll need on their fostering journey.

Right across the south west, foster carers now have the chance to extend their network of support and build friendships for children and adults alike through the Mockingbird programme.

Your gateway to local council fostering

If you require this document in a different format please contact:

info@fosterwithyourlocalcouncil.org.uk



Start your local council fostering journey and get in touch with a member of our team via the methods below.

📍 0300 456 0120

🌐 www.fosterwithyourlocalcouncil.org.uk

📧 info@fosterwithyourlocalcouncil.org.uk

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