



The role of a foster carer

This description is drawn from Standards and Regulations, the Nexus Fostering Carers' Charter and guidance for good practice. It includes the voices of our children, young people, foster carers and their children.

What carers should know

In 2023 we asked our Youth Council what they think Foster Carers should know.

Their answers tell us that it's all about getting to know who they really are as individuals rather than as a set of facts and problems. Sam's* reply was to know about school and stuff relating to him; Ben* said gaming, motor sport and to have a knowledge of our interests; Emily* said they should learn how to draw and do art as this is something she likes to do".



■ We would love to use the real names of our amazing young people who took the time to share their thoughts with us but protecting and keeping them safe is always the most important thing for us. Once you go through more of the process though, we hope that you will get to meet our Youth Council and learn from their insight.

What makes a good foster carer?

To be a good foster carer, you must be patient, resilient and flexible in your approach.

You need to have the enthusiasm to attend support groups with an ambition to learn and develop skills and knowledge through our training and development programme.

You should also have;

- ✓ A genuine wish to make a difference in a young person's life
- ✓ Good communication skills
- ✓ A sense of humour
- ✓ The ability to think on your feet to find solutions to problems

Nexus Fostering aims to provide fostering placements that offer a stable and consistent experience of family life, to enhance and maximise life opportunities of children and young people looked-after.

In simple terms...

Foster carers provide care in their home for children and young people looked-after who are the responsibility of the Local Authority.

"They look after them well; give them time and space; give choices."

Young Person

Together, we create an environment where all individuals feel safe, respected and listened to, regardless of their backgrounds or personal attributes. Individual differences are recognised and celebrated.

Nexus Fostering Carers' Charter

Foster carers care for children and young people placed with them as if they were a child of their family. Carers listen to their views, promote their interests and help them to understand and participate in events that affect them. They safeguard and promote their welfare.

Duties and responsibilities

1. To care for the child or young person.

Foster carers provide a high standard of day-to-day care to children and young people that meets their individual needs. They understand the needs of children and young people separated from their families. They offer nurture, comfort and protection.

They are there to be relied on.

They will:

- ✓ Ensure children and young people looked-after have an understanding of their identity, including their origins, religion and culture.
- ✓ Understand the importance of the birth family and any other people a child or young person believes are significant.
- ✓ Manage family contact positively.
- ✓ Keep children and young people safe from harm and abuse and teach them to recognise risk and seek help.
- ✓ Help a child or young person to be ambitious, live up to their abilities and fulfil their potential.
- ✓ Promote self-esteem.
- ✓ Encourage participation in activities.
- ✓ Set boundaries without being rigid.
- ✓ Help children and young people manage their emotions and their behaviour.
- ✓ Support a child or young person to be private, not secretive.
- ✓ Understand that "Nobody's good at everything, but everyone's good at something".

2. To act as an advocate for each child or young person.

Foster carers listen to children and young people, seek their views in day-to-day activity and in planning for their own lives, and help them to be heard.

They will:

- ✓ Take their views into account and where their requests cannot be met, help them to understand the reasons why.
- ✓ Understand that the child or young person has a valid view of their own life.

3. To promote family membership and support links to other families.

Foster carers promote secure attachments within which the child or young person can trust that adults will provide safe and effective care.

They will:

- ✓ Make sure there is thoughtful, effective communication between all members of the fostering family.
- ✓ Help young people move to independence, return to their birth family or live with new families.
- ✓ Prepare young people for adulthood by teaching and encouraging life skills.
- ✓ Support their own family and friends to understand the task of providing a home for someone else's child.

Together we can make a difference...

Duties and responsibilities

4. To work as part of a team.

Foster carers work with agency staff according to Nexus Fostering policies and procedures. They manage confidential information and respect the confidentiality of others.

They will:

- ✓ Work with Care Plans and Placement Plans, which set out what is expected from everyone around the child or young person.
- ✓ Build their understanding of the circumstances leading to children and young people becoming looked-after.
- ✓ Attend and participate in planning and review meetings, school meetings and events and court hearings.
- ✓ Keep written records and contribute to agency reports.
- ✓ Work with other professionals.
- ✓ Research and engage in community resources to support children and young people's educational, leisure and social activity.
- ✓ Make the decisions delegated to them, considering individual needs and safety while providing an 'ordinary' life for that child or young person.
- ✓ Understand and manage unpredictability in situations, plans, timescales, human reactions and behaviours.
- ✓ Balance their roles of parent, carer, advocate and professional colleague.



5. To recognise their own needs for support and development.

Foster carers attend training, think about what they have learnt and put it into practice.

They will:

- ✓ Use regular supervision and training opportunities to develop their practice and receive guidance and support.
- ✓ Meet required standards of practice.
- ✓ Use their personal strengths and professional learning to appreciate, accept, manage or change the needs and behaviours of children and young people.
- ✓ Establish and maintain links with other carers.



Information correct at time of printing 05/2024

If you are interested, then speak to our friendly team on

0800 389 0143

or visit us online at nexusfostering.co.uk