Dorset Council

foster with Dorset Council

Information Pack

April 2023

Foster with Dorset Overview

Dorset Council fostering service puts the children who need loving, local foster homes at the heart of everything we do.

Our focus is on keeping local children close to their schools, friends and birth families.

Thanks to our local knowledge, good connections to essential services and 24/7 wrap around support, we're best placed to find great foster carers for children and young people across Dorset.

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I'm **new** to fostering

We know that becoming a foster carer isn't a decision you'll take lightly.

It's a big commitment and there are many things you'll want to consider first.

Our focus at Dorset Council is to make sure that you've got all the information you need to help you decide if becoming a foster carer is the right path for you.

We're interested in hearing from people from all walks of life. So as long as you're...

- over 21
- interested in fostering
- and have a spare bedroom

...we'd welcome your application to become a foster carer with us.

Why foster?

Every 20 minutes, a child comes into care in need of a foster family in the UK.

By becoming a foster carer with Dorset Council, you'll be giving a young person the chance to lead a safe and fulfilled life by offering them a stable place to call home.

Can I foster if...

I have my own children? Yes! As a parent, you'll have plenty of useful skills for becoming a foster carer. Your children will be an important part of the process and their wellbeing is our priority.

I've never had children? Of course! We provide all our newly approved carers with a training and support package to equip them with all the skills and knowledge they need to be great foster carers.

I have a job? Yes! As long as you have enough time to dedicate to fostering, including contact time, meetings, training and other responsibilities.

I live in a rented home? Yes! Plenty of our foster carers live in rented homes. All we ask is that you can demonstrate stability in your home and have a spare room available.

I'm retired? Yes! There's no upper age limit to fostering. You just need to be fit and healthy enough to take on the responsibility of looking after a child.

I'm returning to fostering

We're delighted that you're thinking of returning to fostering.

We don't need to tell you how rewarding being a foster carer is, or how challenging it can be – as you already know! Instead, we'll tell you everything you need to know about becoming a foster carer with Dorset Council and why you should choose us.

Why foster with us?

Dorset Council fostering service puts the children who need loving, local foster homes at the heart of everything we do.

Our focus is on keeping local children close to their schools, friends and birth families.

Thanks to our local knowledge, good connections to essential services and 24/7 wrap around support, we're best placed to find great foster carers for children and young people across Dorset.

What type of foster care can you offer?

There are many different types of foster care. At Dorset Council, we have particular need for foster carers for teenagers, young people with complex needs and sibling groups.

Our training and support package

Our foster carers get an extensive training and support package throughout their fostering journey that's tailored to their needs.

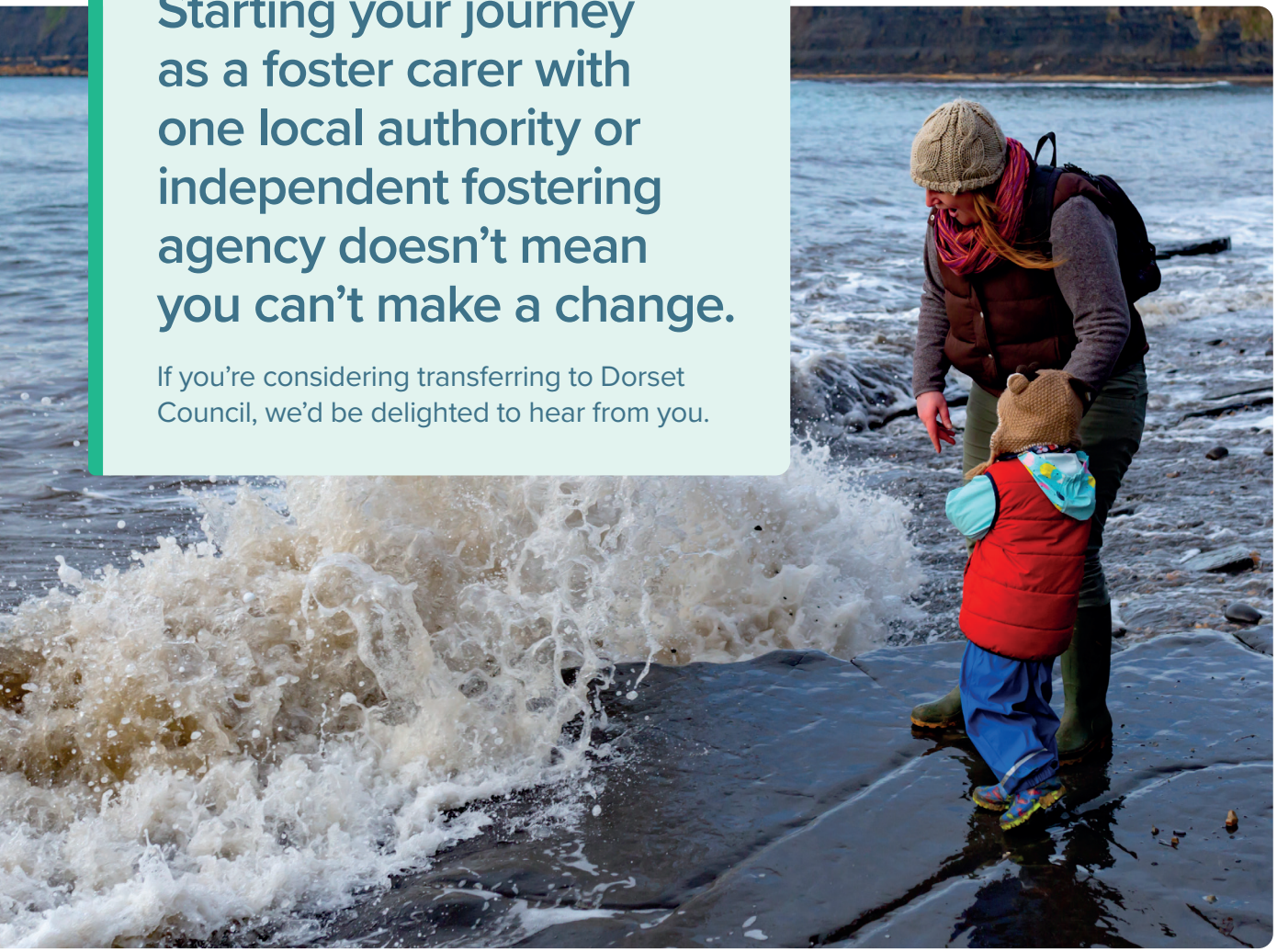
This includes access to the Foster Carer Training Handbook which details all the courses available to you. You'll also have access to our online training.

Once you've been approved as a carer with Dorset Council, we'll provide visits every month to make sure things are going well, with regular telephone contact and additional support visits as needed.

I'm looking to transfer

Starting your journey as a foster carer with one local authority or independent fostering agency doesn't mean you can't make a change.

If you're considering transferring to Dorset Council, we'd be delighted to hear from you.



Why foster with us?

Dorset Council fostering service puts the children who need loving, local foster homes at the heart of everything we do. Our focus is on keeping local children close to their schools, friends and birth families.

Thanks to our local knowledge, good connections to essential services and 24/7 wrap around support, we're best placed to find great foster carers for children and young people across Dorset.

How do I transfer?

Our foster carers get extensive training and the process of transitioning to become a foster carer is nice and simple.

Once you've decided that you'd like to transfer, the first thing to do is get in touch with us.

What is fostering?

There are many different types of foster care.

At Dorset Council, we have particular need for foster carers for teenagers, young people with complex needs and sibling groups.

Here are some of the other different types of foster care.

Short-term foster carers look after children before they move to a longer-term family or return to their family home. The care and attention they give the children can help prepare them for their next move.

Long-term foster carers will look after children throughout their childhood or sometimes beyond under staying put arrangements. Foster carers will support children to keep in touch with the people and places that are important to them to maintain lifelong links and at every step be working towards independence.

Parent and child foster carers offer a home to both parent and child, providing extra help and care to support parents to successfully care for their child. Family and Friends or Connected Carers – care for a child who they know or who is part of their family.

Respite foster carers provide care for children over a short period of time for example at weekends or overnight during the week. Respite carers provide families and foster carers with a network of support.

Specialist family carers are provided by the Harbour service for children on the edge of care and in care. Each foster carer will offer a home and support for young people with particularly complex needs. Specialist Family carers are carers who have been specifically chosen for their ability to provide this intensive and dedicated care.

Foster for adoption carer are carers who care for babies and young children where the plan may be for adoption or return to their birth family.

Supported lodgings carers provides homes for young people age 18 to 25-year-olds who need a guiding hand as they move towards independence.

What training and support is offered?

Our approach

Keeping local children close to their schools, friends and birth families is really important to us at Dorset Council.

Our fostering service helps children in care stay close to home by placing them with foster carers from their local communities. By doing this, we're able to offer young people throughout Dorset a loving, stable place to call home. By becoming a foster carer with Dorset Council, you'll become a part of a wider community of carers made up of over **191 households** across Dorset.

You'll benefit from our **24/7 wrap around care** and support, and will have easy access to all of our training and essential services.

Training

Our foster carers get an extensive training and support package throughout their fostering journey that's tailored to their needs. This includes access to the Foster Carer Training Handbook which details all the courses available to you. You'll also have access to our online training.

Within 12 months of your approval, or 18 months if you're someone who has a connection to the family, you'll be offered support to achieve your Training and Development Standards. You'll also be expected to keep a personal development portfolio up to date so you can show what learning and development you have completed.

Wrap around support

Once you've been approved as a carer with Dorset Council, we'll provide visits every month to make sure things are going well, with regular telephone contact and additional support visits as needed.

Through these visits, our fostering social workers will help you develop a consistent and quality approach to caring for the young people placed with you.

Wider support is also available through:

- **Support groups**
- **The Foster Carer Forum** *(which meets on a quarterly basis)*
- **The duty fostering and social work services**
- **An out of hours service**
- **Social events** *(such as our fostering fair and annual awards ceremony)*
- **Other events which may be organised through the year**

The Mockingbird Family Model

We have launched a programme called Mockingbird, to deliver sustainable foster care in Dorset.

Mockingbird is a global award winning and pioneering programme led by The Fostering Network. It nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families, supporting them to build a resilient and caring community through a constellation of six to ten families which is led by a hub home carer.

Allowances

Skills-level payments

As a foster carer for Dorset Council, you'll receive a skills-level fee for each child you foster based on your:

- Knowledge
- Experience
- Evidenced competencies

Skills Level	Weekly fee per child in care (LAC)
Level 1: Age 0 - 10	£105
Level 1: Age 11 - 17	£115
Level 2: Age 0 - 10	£151
Level 2: Age 11 - 17	£161
Level 3: Age 0 - 10	£231
Level 3: Age 11 - 17	£241
Level 4: Age 0 - 10	£415
Level 4: Age 11 - 17	£425
Level 5	£586

All-inclusive allowance

The all-inclusive allowance (AIA) is meant to meet all the usual expenses you have when caring for a child as a foster carer. We pay AIA in 4 age bands:

Age Group	Weekly AIA
0 to 4 years	£164
5 to 10 years	£189
11 to 15 years	£234
16 to 17 years	£283

We also pay additional allowances based on your skills level.

How to apply

If you have any questions or would like to find out more about fostering with us, please contact us by email or telephone:

Email: fosteringenquiries@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Tel: 01305 225568
Web: fosterwithdorsetcouncil.com

Children's Services
County Hall
Colliton Park
Dorchester
DT1 1XJ

Change the life of a local child and become a foster carer with Dorset Council.

Click here to apply now or scan the QR code with your mobile device.