



# Make foster care your career

Join our fostering family as a full-time intensive foster carer and help keep our children on Island.

This includes financial benefits, high-quality training and support, so you can really make a difference.



## **Intensive Foster Carer**

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**Department:** Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES)

**Division:** Fostering and Adoption Team

**Reports to:** Supervising social worker or representative of the Children's Service

### **Background**

Jersey has maintained a thriving population of foster carers over many years through annual recruitment campaigns. Current foster carers in Jersey provide invaluable care to children in Jersey. However, it has been recognised that we have been unable to provide enough foster homes for some children and young people with exceptionally complex need who require therapeutic care. This has led to some children or young people being placed in residential homes or off-Island in specialist provision or in secure accommodation.

For many years, the Fostering and Adoption Service has wanted to develop a specialist service to provide this much-needed provision. The service has a fantastic opportunity to develop intensive fostering in Jersey.

There has also been increasing demand in recent years for short-break care and respite provision for children with complex needs. Intensive foster care will be able to provide further support to the existing provision for children and young people with complex needs and, importantly, this will be in a family environment.

### **What is intensive foster care?**

While our current foster carers have many of the qualities, skills and commitment as described in this document, the expectations of intensive foster carers will be greater and there will be specific requirements.

There are distinct elements to intensive fostering. The expectation is that an intensive foster carer is available full-time and he or she will not be in any other employment.

Intensive fostering is a specialist fostering service for children, but more often teenagers, who present with highly complex needs and challenging behaviours. Difficulties often stem from early developmental trauma and, as such, they require close proximity and specialist care.

As a result, this can lead to challenging behaviours because their needs are complex. Anger, depression or withdrawn behaviour can be common amongst these children and young people. They need to live in a nurturing family environment with foster carers who have the knowledge, understanding and skills to care for and support them unconditionally, until they can return home, live independently or access other family settings provided by the Children's Service.

Intensive fostering will also include bail and remand care, to prevent a young person being detained in a police cell or secure accommodation unnecessarily.

Foster care affords the child or young person the best chance of building a trusting, enduring relationship with their carer. To achieve this goal, we take a proactive approach to the role and provide our registered carers with strong support networks and services including, where required, responsive psychological and therapeutic care.

As intensive foster carers, you may also be asked to undertake respite care of children and young people on behalf of other intensive foster carers. Intensive fostering will provide family environments for those children and young people with complex needs, a long-term condition or life-limiting illness requiring short-break or respite provision to help support their birth family to have a break from their caring responsibilities and prevent family breakdown. Such support provides children and young people with an opportunity to spend time away from their primary carers in a family environment where they are supported to develop their independence, emotional resilience and confidence.

### **What we will offer you**

- We offer a fee of £40,000 per annum plus additional maintenance allowances when a child or young person is placed in your care. This covers the day-to-day cost of caring for them
- Travel expenses
- All the necessary equipment required to support the child/young person placed in your home
- Regular contact from your support social worker via telephone and home visits
- Out-of-hour's support when the social work office is closed (includes evenings, weekends and bank holidays)
- Support as required from other members of the professional team
- Support groups for foster carers
- 28 days paid holidays per year. Additional nights can be agreed in certain circumstances
- Extensive access to on-going training
- The opportunity to mentor other foster carers and co-facilitate training
- Membership of Foster Talk, a leading UK non-profit organisation providing professional services to foster carers
- Insurance cover provided by Foster Talk and paid for by the Government of Jersey.

### **Training and support**

Alongside the assessment process you will be expected to complete a comprehensive mandatory training programme for all intensive foster carers, this consists of and is not limited to the following:

- Skills to Foster and introduction to the Secure Base Model
- Paediatric First Aid
- Record Keeping
- Foundation in Child Protection
- Managing allegations against foster carers
- Solihull Approach and Solihull Trauma training

- Working with the Independent Reviewing Officer
- Dangers of social media
- MAYBO – Positive approaches to behaviour
- Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP is a model of intervention based on theories of attachment for children who have experienced developmental trauma)
- Understanding bail and remand foster care
- Online training through AC-Education
- Ongoing specialist training as identified in personal development plans.

An intensive foster carer will be able to understand the experiences of trauma and abuse of the child or young person and how this can negatively affect their lives. Having a clear understanding what has happened to a child /young person, means the carer will be able to respond appropriately and, through training, have the skills to support the child's emotional, psychological and social development.

From our work with children and young people, we understand that no two cases are identical, and while the support and nurturing that the intensive foster carer may give to one child/young person may be enough, another child/young person may require a programme of ongoing therapy. This may involve you to work with a psychologist, therapist or specialist such as CAMHS. The number of sessions may vary depending on the need of the child/young person.

As an intensive foster carer, you will be part of a professional team around the child/young person and will be part of regular meetings (initially weekly) in respect of the child/young person in your care. You will have an identified supervising social worker (SSW) who will work alongside you to provide you with support and guidance, but also ensure that the child/young person is being afforded the high level of attuned nurturing care we expect from intensive foster carers.

Formal supervision will take place every four weeks, or as necessary, as part of care planning. Your SSW will contact you by phone on a regular basis (at least weekly) and they are available during working hours for further support and advice if necessary.

There is also an out-of-hour's duty service that will be available to you for support and advice. The staff operating this service will be conversant with trauma-informed approaches and be provided with training to support intensive foster carers.

## What next?

The initial fostering campaign will finish on Tuesday 17 March 2020; this includes three information events in different parts of the Island. These are:

- Wednesday 4 March 2020 at St Peter's Parish Hall from 6pm to 8pm (in the chapel)
- Saturday 7 March 2020 at St Martin's Public Hall from 10am to 12pm
- Saturday 14 March at St Paul's Gate, St Helier, from 10am to 12pm

The first cohort of interested parties will need to register an interest by Tuesday 31 March 2020. An initial home visit will then be undertaken with interested parties by Monday 13 April 2020, when details about the assessment process and training programme will be shared with the prospective intensive foster carers.

Following the initial home visit, a decision will be made by the intensive fostering support lead and the fostering and adoption team manager as to the suitability of the prospective applicants to progress to the selection process. If you pass the selection process, you will be accepted to the intensive assessment and training programme.

The first cohort of intensive foster carers are expected to start their assessment and training programmes on the week beginning Monday 20 April 2020. All foster carers are approved via the fostering panel, which has independent panel members to ensure transparency and overview of the process.

The first cohort of prospective carers are expected to go to the fostering panel for approval in October 2020.

## **What can fostering achieve?**

Foster care can be very rewarding for the child and the carer. From the child's perspective, they can start to enjoy positive attachments with carers who are skilled and confident in managing their needs. This helps them to feel safe and secure, which transfers to other areas in their lives. They can start to build friendships, focus on their education, improve their self-esteem and develop positive ambitions for the future.

For the carers, they get to experience making a positive, dynamic difference to a child's life, in providing a consistent and secure home environment in which children can achieve and thrive. A foster carer can truly alter the course of a child or young person's life. Receiving consistent understanding and support can enable a child to develop on a global level, emotionally, socially and behaviourally.

We believe in our vision of developing a fostering service that has the ability to provide opportunities for all children and young people who live with foster carers, regardless of their needs. We will continue to strive to provide our carers with ongoing opportunities for them to develop their experience and build on their skills, insight and knowledge in relation to children's and young people's needs. Offering a clear path for professional development demonstrates the value we place on our carers, their efforts and their aspirations. Intensive foster carers will be supported effectively, learn from, and develop with our existing foster carers who have a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills. Some of our existing foster carers may want to consider becoming an intensive foster carer and intensive foster carers may also consider becoming a 'level 3 foster carer'.

## **Person specification**

We are looking for people who meet the following criteria in order to progress their interest:

- If you are a couple enquiring, one person will need to identify as the main carer
- The main carer cannot undertake any other form of paid employment
- There are no children under the age of 16 living in your home
- The home must have a spare bedroom for a child/young person
- Your residential status on the Island must be secure

- Be available to the child or young person to provide close-proximity care and be committed to their role. Most intensive foster placements will last up to two years and potentially beyond this
- An intensive foster carer will need to be available and responsive 24/7, 365 days a year
- Applicants will need to engage with intensive assessment and training (training for the first cohort of applicants is approximately April to September 2020).

The role of an intensive foster carer requires people who have the following personal qualities:

### **Self-motivation**

What is your motivation to become an intensive foster carer? This motivation will need to carry you through some very challenging situations.

### **Patience**

How long does it take to process/resolve trauma? How do you undo years and years of neglect or fear? There is no time frame for this and children will recover at their own speed. They need carers who will support them through the process, advocate for their needs and have realistic expectations as to how long and how hard the journey may be while remaining calm and contained.

### **Resilience**

As intensive foster carers, you will need much strength and resilience to manage incredibly stressful and challenging situations. You will need to be able to face challenges and continue to be resolute that you can make a difference and support young people to make long-term improvements to their functioning and wellbeing. You need to be able to manage challenges in a way that is robust and restorative.

### **Warmth**

We can all too often take emotional warmth for granted but many children grow up with a distinct lack of warmth in their relationships with others. Carers need to have a warm and nurturing disposition and be able to transfer this into their care of children and provide a high-warmth, low-criticism environment. This emotional warmth helps children to build trust and develop empathy for others, which is integral to their relationships moving forward.

### **Good communicator**

Any child, whatever their age, needs someone to communicate with, someone to help them process their past and articulate their thoughts and feelings. Communication comes in many forms, including non-verbal means, and what works well for one child may not work for another. Carers will need to be adept at listening and talking to children and developing other specific skills needed to communicate with children who have complex needs, such as Makaton.

### **Compassion and empathy**

One of your key attributes should be that you are a compassionate and empathetic person who can understand a child or young person's journey and how this has affected them. You will need to be able to apply this understanding to the care you offer children and ensure an empathetic approach at all times. You will also need to apply the same principle to the child or young person's birth family, showing them respect and working restoratively with them as part of the team around the child.

Intensive foster carers who provide bail and remand care are expected to provide non-judgemental support and create an environment where a young person can start to plan a positive path for their lives.

### Job description for an intensive foster carer

Expectations of intensive foster carers:

- If approved, you will be registered for children and young people from birth to 18 years old. Typically, the children that you will be asked to look after will be teenagers
- You will be expected to accept any matched placement
- If you are not already caring for a child/young person you could be requested to be available in an emergency
- There is an expectation that intensive fostering placements will not disrupt. If there are concerns we expect you to work with a plan to prevent this from happening. However, if this is not successful there should be a planned ending, with at least four weeks' notice
- You must endeavour to make yourself available for supervision, support and visits from the child/young person's social worker. These visits can be announced
- You will be expected to carry out other duties when you do not have a child in your care or a child or young person is at school/college. This will be mentoring or supporting other foster carers, providing out-of-hours support, as well as co-facilitating training and development opportunities for all foster carers and being part of recruitment campaigns. There will also be opportunities to develop yourself
- You may be expected to support all our foster carers with respite provision and also be considered for short break/respite for children with complex needs
- You may be required to facilitate contact between your fostered child/young person and their birth family. This will only take place if it is felt safe to do so and a risk assessment is in place.

## Appendix 1

Caring for a child or young person

Specific responsibilities	Skills needed
1.1 To provide day-to-day care for a child/young person, taking account of the particular issues for children/young people who are separated from their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to provide an excellent standard of care to other people's children</li> <li>• An ability to promote healthy development including emotional, physical, sexual and educational</li> <li>• An ability to recognise the needs of children/young people and to prioritise these needs. To develop and maintain a</li> </ul>

Specific responsibilities	Skills needed
	<p>secure, healthy relationship between the child/young person and yourself.</p>
<p>1.2 To be a short-break and respite carer for a child/young person who has complex needs, taking account of their needs and working alongside their birth family.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to understand the needs of children with complex needs and care for them in line with their care plan, which includes personal care, medication and other health needs</li> <li>• Work closely with birth family to form a strong working relationship in which the child/young person experiences harmony and seamless transitions.</li> </ul>
<p>1.3 To participate in developing care plans for the child/young person and to make sure these plans are carried out. To undertake specified tasks in the care plan for the child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to take responsibility for completing identified tasks</li> <li>• An ability to work well with all those people in a child or young person's network, including the child's family, social worker, other professionals and people who are significant to a child or young person.</li> </ul>
<p>1.4 To promote the healthy growth and development of the child or young person with a particular emphasis on health and education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A knowledge of child development and an ability to provide experiences which will stimulate a child/young person and provide opportunities to develop new skills</li> <li>• An ability to manage the health needs of children and young people in a proactive way and encourage the child to value their own health</li> <li>• An ability to encourage full participation in educational activities, and to work together with education professionals</li> <li>• An ability to transport children and young people to and from school and other educational activities</li> <li>• An ability to set appropriate boundaries and manage a child or young person's behaviour without the use of physical or other inappropriate punishment.</li> </ul>
<p>1.5 To ensure that the child or young person is encouraged to develop and maintain a positive understanding of their origins, religion and culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to listen and communicate with children and young people in ways appropriate for their age and understanding</li> <li>• A respect for the child or young person's origins, religion and culture and a</li> </ul>

Specific responsibilities	Skills needed
	<p>willingness to learn more and to enable the child or young person to participate in cultural and religious activities.</p>
<p>1.6 To assist and support parents and others who are significant in a child or young person's life to develop and maintain healthy relationships with them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to remain respectful of parents and others, and to communicate well with them</li> <li>• An ability to understand the important role of parents and others in the lives of looked-after children and to involve the parent (as appropriate) in the child's life</li> <li>• A willingness to facilitate contact, which may include providing transport or supporting a child or young person through the process.</li> </ul>
<p>1.7 To assist children and young people to move on in a positive manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to communicate with children and young people about the reasons for the move in a positive manner</li> <li>• An ability to encourage the child or young person to develop good relationships with the future carers</li> <li>• An ability to help the child or young person gain and maintain memories of the time they have spent with you</li> <li>• An ability to share what you have learnt about the child or young person's needs with both the social worker and future carers</li> <li>• An ability to manage your own feelings about the move in a way which is beneficial for the child or young person</li> <li>• To support young people into independence, if appropriate.</li> </ul>

Providing a safe and caring environment

Specific responsibilities	Skills needed
<p>2.1 To ensure that a child or young person is kept safe from harm and abuse and that they are taught how to get help if they are worried or frightened by anyone or anything.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A willingness to develop a safe caring policy within your household, with the help of a worker from the fostering team</li> <li>• An ability to ensure that a child or young person is kept safe from harm or abuse</li> <li>• An ability to discuss issues surrounding harm and abuse with children and young people in a way that is appropriate to their age and understanding. By doing so, to</li> </ul>

Specific responsibilities	Skills needed
	<p>help children develop skills and strategies to keep themselves safe from harm and abuse and to know how to seek help if their safety is threatened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to provide children with the opportunities and confidence to tell you if they are or have been harmed in any way.</li> </ul>
<p>2.2 To act as an advocate for each child and young person.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to talk to children and young people about what they think and feel</li> <li>• An ability to respect the child or young person's point of view and to help them share their point of view, even if you personally disagree with it</li> <li>• An ability to challenge professionals, when appropriate, and yet still maintain a good working relationship with them.</li> </ul>

### Working as part of a team

Specific responsibilities	Skills needed
<p>3.1 To be part of the Intensive Fostering Service and work with staff and other professionals within guidelines, policies and procedures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to communicate and work with a wide range of people, including professionals</li> <li>• A willingness to learn about the department's guidelines, policies and procedures, with the support of your supervising fostering worker</li> <li>• To understand your role and responsibilities as part of the Intensive Fostering Service, including decision making you have as part of delegated authority from the parent/s or those with parental responsibility.</li> </ul>

Specific responsibilities	Skills needed
3.2 To attend and actively participate in all reviews, family meetings, case conferences and court hearings, as required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to attend all appropriate meetings and to share your views, either verbally or in writing (with the help of your supervising worker, if necessary)</li> <li>• An ability to support the child or young person through any meetings they may be required to attend.</li> </ul>
3.3 To keep written records of placements and to contribute to the child or young person's file and records.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A willingness to learn about what needs to be recorded and how</li> <li>• An ability to keep records and store them safely</li> <li>• A willingness to share information with the child or young person's social worker and your own supervising worker</li> <li>• An ability to help the child or young person gain and maintain memories of their life.</li> </ul>
3.4 To deal responsibly with confidential information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to keep information confidential</li> <li>• A willingness to learn (with your supervising worker) about what information may be shared with whom.</li> </ul>

#### Developing further skills as an Intensive Foster Carer

Specific responsibilities	Skills needed
4.1 To contribute to your own development as professional carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to appreciate how personal experiences have affected you and your family, and the impact fostering is likely to have on your whole family</li> <li>• An ability to think about your own actions and attitudes and the impact these have on other people</li> <li>• An ability to develop a good support network and to make use of this network, including attending foster carers' support groups</li> <li>• A willingness to take part fully in training opportunities</li> </ul>

Specific responsibilities	Skills needed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ability to sustain positive and effective relationships through periods of difficulty and stress</li> <li>• To utilise your knowledge and experience with other foster carers through mentoring and support groups</li> <li>• To take part in facilitating support to other foster carers, for example Skills to Foster.</li> </ul>

As an intensive foster carer, you may have gaps between children/young people being placed with you. It is expected that you will provide mentoring and support (this may be out of hours) to other intensive or regular foster carers, as well as co-facilitate training when you are suitably equipped with the knowledge and skills to do so. You will also be required to take part in the recruitment of new foster carers.