**Types of Placement (including changes e.g. Adoption)**

1. **Introduction**

There are many different types of placements . If you are considering adopting your foster child please see [What If I want to Adopt my Foster Child or become a Special Guardian?](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/type_placement.html#what_if) below.

1. **Types of Fostering**

**Short-term Fostering:**Short-term carers provide temporary care for a child/young person, who is unable to live with their family. Children may remain with a foster carer from a few days or weeks, months or longer. The child is with the carer temporary while plans are made and carried out. Regular family time with significant people such as birth family is an important part of short-term fostering.

**Long-term Fostering:**Long-term carers offer permanent foster care for child/young person. A child in long term foster care will continue to live with their foster carers until they reach independence. They may also remain with their foster carers under a staying put arrangement once they reach their 18th birthday.

**Short Breaks for Disabled Children:**These carers provide respite care to children with disabilities living with their own families. This gives their parents or usual foster carers a break.

**Respite Care:**Respite carers also offer support to other foster carers. Whilst we are aware that children and young people are unlikely to benefit from respite care within their foster family, we are also aware that foster carers do sometimes need this support to ensure children can remain with their current fostering families in order to succeed for all concerned.

**Support Care:**This service provides support for children and young people who are not in care but there is involvement with Children’s Social Care due to difficulties within the family. This is a usually a time limited service based on the child/young person’s assessed needs.

**Family and Friends Carers:**Family & Friends foster carers provide care for a child/young person who cannot live with their birth parents but can live within their extended family network, or a friend of the family. These arrangements help to provide continuity of care, family, school and friendships, networks and keep the child/young person’s cultural and individual identity.

**Emergency Care:**Emergency carers provide time-limited care options for a child/young person in emergencies, these arrangements usually happen out of office hours.

**Private Fostering:**Private fostering is when a child/young person under 16 (or if disabled 18) is cared for, for more than 28 days by an adult who is not a relative and the arrangement has been made between the carer and the parent. The parent and/the person providing this type of fostering must notify the local authority Children’s Social Care that the child has been placed within a private fostering arrangement.

**Staying Put Arrangements:**  
Staying Put arrangements extend the foster placement into a ’Staying Put‘ arrangement by agreement between the care leaver and the carer, in order to support the young person until such time that they are fully prepared for adulthood. The young person will no longer be cared for under the fostering regulations as the Staying Put arrangement occurs when the young person turns 18. The arrangement ensures the young person can experience and benefit from a transition similar to their peers, avoid social exclusion and be more likely to successfully manage their independence when they do move on. Your supervising social worker and the young person’s social worker will discuss this with you when your foster child reaches the 16 years as part of their care planning and developing their Pathway Plan.

**Mockingbird Model:**  
The Mockingbird Family Model is an alternative method of delivering foster care. It is designed to improve placement stability, safety and permanency for children and young people in care, and to improve support for foster carers.

Mockingbird brings together up to ten foster families to form a 'satellite constellation. At the heart of each constellation is a hub home were a specially recruited and trained foster carer supports other carers within the constellation by offering respite care, social activities, training, support and guidance.

The constellation empowers families to support each other and overcome problems before they escalate, and offers children a more positive experience of care.

1. **How Many Children Can I Foster?**

On approval the fostering service will decide how many children you are approved for, their ages and gender as well as your category of approval. There are times, however, when the fostering service may ask you to take a child/young person outside your approval range if it is felt this would be a way to meet the child’s needs.

When this happens the fostering service can vary your approval for a short time either to allow for longer term plans to be made or for a review of your approval as a foster carer to take place so that your approval status can be changed in order to accommodate the child for a longer period.

1. **Exemptions**

The 'usual fostering limit' is three, so nobody may foster more than three children unless:

* The foster children are all siblings (then there is no upper limit); or
* Bradford Council exempts the carer from the usual fostering limit in relation to specific placements.

In considering whether to exempt a person from the usual fostering limit, we must consider:

* The number of children whom the person proposes to foster;
* The arrangements which the person proposes for the care and accommodation of the fostered children;
* The intended and likely relationship between the person and the fostered children;
* The period of time for which he/she proposes to foster the children; and
* Whether the welfare of the fostered children (and any other children who are or will be living in the accommodation) will be safeguarded and protected.

1. **What If I want to Adopt my Foster Child or become a Special Guardian?**

**Adoption**

Adopting a child is very different to fostering. This is about making a forever commitment to the child so this needs to be considered carefully. The most important thing is that there is a [Permanence Plan](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/permanence_plan.html) for the child to be adopted and if this is the case and you would like to find out more then speak to your Supervising Social Worker.

If the decision is to proceed, an assessment will be completed focusing on you as a prospective adopter and to determine whether this will be in the long-term interests of the child. You will receive the same assessment, preparation and training as other prospective adopters.

Special Guardianship or Long-term fostering may be another option.

**Special Guardianship Orders**

This Order addresses the needs of a significant group of children, who need a sense of stability and security but who do not wish to make the absolute legal break with their birth family that is associated with adoption. It also provides an alternative for achieving permanence in families where adoption, for cultural or religious reasons, is not an option. You can apply for a [Special Guardianship Order](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/special_guardianship_order.html) once the child has lived with you for one year immediately preceding the application.

Special Guardians have [Parental Responsibility](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/parental_respons.html) for the child and although this is shared with the child’s parents, the Special Guardian has clear responsibility for day to day matters without the need for consultation with others. The parents still have to be consulted and give their consent to the child’s change of name, adoption, placement abroad and any other such fundamental issues. A Special Guardianship Order made in relation to a Child in Care replaces the Care Order and the Local Authority no longer has Parental Responsibility. In these circumstances, the Care Order is revived if the Special Guardianship Order is revoked.

Special Guardians may be supported financially or otherwise by Bradford Children and Families Trust and, as with adoptive parents; they have the right to request an assessment for support services at any time after the Order is made.

Special Guardianship has the following advantages as a permanence plan:

* The carers have Parental Responsibility and clear authority to make decisions on day to day issues about the child’s care;
* There is added legal security to the Order in that leave is required for parents to apply to discharge the Order and will only be granted if a change of circumstances can be established since the Order was made;
* It maintains legal links to the birth family;
* There need be no social worker involvement, unless this is identified as necessary, in which case an assessment of the need for support must be made by the relevant local authority.

Special Guardianship has the following disadvantages as a permanence plan:

* The Order only lasts until the child is 18 and does not necessarily bring with it the sense of belonging to the Special Guardian’s family as an Adoption Order does;
* As the child is not a legal member of the family, if difficulties arise there may be less willingness to persevere and seek resolution;
* Although there are restrictions on applications to discharge the Order, such an application is possible and may be perceived as a threat to the child’s stability.