



WELCOME GUIDE FOR SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL HOLIDAY AND SUPPORT FOSTER CARERS

JANUARY 2025

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DEAR FOSTER CARER

Welcome to our Fostering Support Care Team as an approved foster carer for the Council. We are delighted to have you on board and are committed to providing you with the necessary understanding of fostering and the support you require. To assist you in this journey, we have created this guide that will help you navigate the fostering process, understand your responsibilities, and access the available support services.

We hope you find this guide to be informative and helpful as you begin your fostering journey. Remember, our Fostering Support Care Team is here to support you every step of the way. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

We look forward to working with you.

OUR SUPPORT CARE TEAM

Our team consists of:

Team manager:

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Social workers:

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You can contact us either by contacting the relevant person or sending an email to SupportTeamInbox@sheffield.gov.uk

FOSTERING HANDBOOK

Along with this guide, we encourage you to also refer to our Fostering Handbook www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/, which provides policies, procedures, and guidance for the fostering service, covering various situations that foster carers may encounter on a daily basis. We suggest that you take a look at the:

- Contents page www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/contents.html and
- Local Resources page www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/local_resources.html of the Handbook, and

familiarise yourself with the information relevant to your specific circumstances and access the Handbook regularly to stay up-to-date with local procedures and guidance.

YOUR ALLOCATED SOCIAL WORKER & SUPERVISORY VISITS

Upon approval as a foster carer, a supervising (fostering) social worker, most likely from our team, will be assigned to you, who will conduct regular visits to your home. These visits, a minimum of every 12 weeks, will assess the progress of any support care you are providing, offer guidance and support, and ensure that you have access to the necessary training and development opportunities to fulfil your role as a foster carer.

Initially, visits are likely to be more frequent to identify and plan your first match with a child, clarify your responsibilities, and provide any necessary support. We understand that you are likely to have many commitments outside your fostering role, so we suggest that you plan ahead with your social worker for their next home visit and provide them with ample notice if rescheduling is required.

In addition to the 12-weekly announced home visits, your social worker will also conduct an unannounced home visit during which they will look at your whole house. This may occur when you are supporting a child or when there is no child in your care. There will be one unannounced home visit during each review period (i.e., one during your first year before your first Annual Review and then one during each subsequent year between your last and next Annual Review). For more information about unannounced home visits, please refer to the 'Unannounced Home Visit Policy' document in the resource section of our Fostering Handbook at www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/local_resources.html. You can find more information about Annual Reviews below.

Apart from home visits, your social worker will also be available via email and mobile phone.

Following each visit, your social worker will provide you with a written record documenting the details of the visit. It is important that you carefully read the record and inform your social worker if you notice any factual errors or if the record is incomplete.

FOSTERING AGREEMENT

Following your approval, you should have received a

fostering agreement by post. It is essential that you not only read and sign the agreement but also take the time to understand it. Please review the document carefully to ensure clarity on both your role as a foster carer and the responsibilities of the fostering service towards you. Once you have thoroughly read and understood the agreement, kindly sign it and return it to us.

HOLIDAY AND SUPPORT CARE & MATCHING

During your assessment, your recruitment social worker would have discussed your preferences regarding the children you would like to support. Once you are approved, your fostering social worker will further discuss this with you and consider the availability of support you can provide. Together, you will determine who you are best suited to support.

FORMS OF SUPPORT CARE

As a holiday and support carer, you may be asked to provide various types of fostering options, which are most likely to include:

Regular overnight support care: This option involves offering support or short break care (see below) to the same child at your home, typically on weekends every 4 to 6 weeks for several months and possibly even years. Such care might be necessary for children in stable or unstable foster placements or those living with their biological or adoptive families or other carers who require regular breaks.

Day care: This option involves one-off or recurring daytime care for a child without overnight stays. It may be required, for example, for school-aged children awaiting school placement or on a reduced timetable, to support another foster carer or for children who are not ready to sleep in other people's homes but would benefit from regular support care.

One-off holiday care: Full-time foster carers, also known as "Task" or "Permanence" carers, can have 14 days of 'time off' per year. During their absence, the children are usually cared for by holiday and support carers. The length of the stay may range from a single overnight stay to about a three-week period.

Out-of-hours (OOH) care: You may choose to be available to provide emergency foster care placements to children during nights, weekends, and bank holidays. The children placed during emergencies are usually not known to social services. They may have been left unsupervised at home, had an argument with their family, or been picked up by the police. If you become an OOH carer, you can choose which night, weekend, or bank holiday to cover and the age group of children you prefer to care for (e.g. 0-12 years old). During your OOH shift, you will be responsible for providing a temporary placement to any child within your chosen age group who is placed with you and care for them until a main foster care or residential placement is

arranged for them. This could take several days so we ask that you are available for at least 4-5 days in total.

Bridging placements: This option involves caring for a child for a specified short-term duration before they move to their main placement. It may be needed, for example, when a child has been in foster care, and their main carer ends their placement due to their own illness or difficulty handling the child's behaviour. You may be asked to care for the child until their next main placement is identified. You can specify the duration for which you are available to assist, or you may be willing to continue caring for the child until a suitable placement becomes available, despite the uncertainty.

Your social worker will discuss your availability and preferences regarding these fostering options and plan it accordingly. Generally, holiday and support carers are expected to provide at least one regular overnight support care and two week of holiday care per year.

Although the majority of holiday and support care placements are arranged beforehand, there are instances where emergency placements are required at short notice. If you are willing to be flexible and open to these last-minute opportunities, you can notify us and we will keep you informed via text, email, or phone about any available fostering options for you to consider. It will then be your decision whether to accept or decline these placements. Alternatively, if you prefer to avoid these situations, you can opt-out of receiving last-minute notifications and instead plan all holiday and support care placements in advance with your allocated social worker.

CHILDREN REQUIRING SUPPORT CARE

Children requiring support care typically belong to one of the following categories:

Children in foster care (looked after children): There are a number of children who are already in foster care but their main carer needs additional support. This is generally for older children who are placed in their 'permanent' or 'growing up' family. As these children gradually settle in and find security with their new carers, they begin to process their past trauma or abuse. This can lead to the development of emotional and behavioural challenges. Our foster carers are trained in therapeutic parenting, which, though rewarding, can be demanding. To provide the best care for these children, our carers may need a break to recharge. By becoming the children's regular support carer, you can assist both the children and their main carer in taking a well-deserved break. Moreover, you can help the children build trust in positive relationships with other adults, resembling the nurturing bonds that many young people have with aunts, uncles, or grandparents. This is especially

important as our children often have limited contact with their birth family and may have lost touch with their extended family network.

There are other reasons why children in foster care may need support care, for example, in cases where siblings are placed together to maintain their bond but have complex needs that are challenging for a single fostering household to manage.

Children living with biological or adoptive parents, extended family, or connected people:

Support care can be offered to children living with adoptive parents, extended family members, or connected people through arrangements like Special Guardianship Orders (SGO). These children often have complex needs stemming from early trauma, abuse, or neglect, similar to those of children in foster care. In addition, those who provide care to these children may also have their own unique challenges (such as health difficulties) that make caring for new family members more demanding. In many instances, these caregivers may not have initially planned or prepared for this caregiving role. For instance, grandparents might have been approached by Social Care and asked if they could provide care for their grandchildren.

In rare occasions support care may be provided to children living with their biological parents who require assistance, for example, due to physical or mental illness or who are developing parenting skills as a result of their own trauma, neglect, or being young parents or care-leavers.

Children with disabilities eligible for short breaks:

This overnight care is for a specific group of children who are eligible for overnight stays away from their families due to their disabilities. The support care allows the children to engage in new experiences, develop relationships with trusted adults outside of their family or school environments, and provides their parents or main carers with a break to catch up on sleep, attend to household tasks, spend quality time with other siblings, and recharge, enabling them to be the best possible parents and carers to all their children.

The disabilities among these children can vary significantly. We are specifically looking for carers for children whose primary need typically involves a learning disability, although some children may also have diagnoses of Autism or ADHD. Additionally, they may face physical challenges like epilepsy. The children may occasionally exhibit challenging behaviour and encounter issues related to communication, eating, and sleeping. They typically attend special schools and often require close supervision to ensure their safety.

We are also looking for carers to support children with significant mental health issues who have previously been in a mental health institution to ensure their safety.

Most of the children reside with their families, although some may live with foster carers.

While it is beneficial if you have experience through work, volunteering, or personal experience of caring for individuals with disabilities, we believe that most carers with the ability to care for children who have experienced trauma have the skills necessary to care for children with these kinds of disabilities. We can also provide or seek training and support tailored to the specific needs of individual children and link you with more experienced carers. Short break carers receive higher rates of pay than those typically offered to foster carers to recognise the increased skills they bring and the demands of this type of care.

MATCHING & INTRODUCTION PROCESS

If you agree to support a child in an emergency, you are likely to receive a phone call from the child's social worker or a duty social worker who will provide you with as much information as they know about the child (which may be, as outlined above, very limited) and will discuss how you can meet the child's needs during their stay with you. They will also discuss whether you need any additional equipment or support.

Planned regular support care usually involves the following process:

MATCHING

A request for support care is shared with the support carer.

The support carer gains more information about the child (e.g., through conversations with the main carer and/or professionals working with the child, attending a bump into meeting).

When required, the support carer receives relevant training to meet the child's needs.

The support carer and the main carer decide whether to proceed further.

PLANNING

A planning meeting takes place:

- Further information about the child is shared.
- The introduction process is planned.
- A date is set to review the outcome of the introductions.

INTRODUCTIONS

The child is informed about the support care.

Introductions take place; a general recommendation:

1. The support carer visits the child at the main carer's house.
2. The main carer and child visit the support carer's home for the first time; the main carer stays.

3. The main carer and child visit the support carer's home for the second time; the main carer leaves unless the child is in distress (depending on the outcome of the visit, additional visits might be necessary before the first overnight stay).
4. Overnight stay – one night.
5. Regular overnight support care.

REVIEWS

Reviews are conducted with a minimum frequency of every six months to ensure that all parties involved are content with the arrangements and to keep you informed about any updates or changes.

For more information about the process and tips on how to support a child in settling into your care, please refer to the 'Guide to Making Regular Support Care Arrangements' at www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/local_resources.html.

LENGTH OF SUPPORT CARE

The duration of support care is determined by the needs of the child and their primary caregivers or parents. In the case of children in long-term foster placements, regular support care may be planned to last throughout their time in foster care or until it is no longer needed or desired. Older teenagers, for instance, may prefer to spend time with their friends as they grow.

For support care aimed at assisting families with difficulties, the goal is often to reach a point where the family no longer requires this support.

Once it has been decided for the support care to come to its end, it can be helpful to plan for a gradual reduction in the frequency of support care to allow everyone to adjust to these changes.

You may be encouraged to maintain contact, either in a formal (paid and documented) or informal manner, with the child and their primary caregivers or parents even after the support care period has concluded. This enables ongoing connections and support, tailored to the individual circumstances and preferences of all involved parties.

HOLIDAY AND SUPPORT CARE – IMPORTANT POINTS

Once you establish connections with other carers, it is possible that they may approach you and ask if you could care for their child. However, it is important to note that any paid work arrangements must be organised through your fostering social worker. It is essential to follow proper channels and guidelines to ensure transparency, appropriate compensation and to ensure necessary records are kept of where

children are staying.

Additionally, it is expected that at least once per year, your fostering social worker will schedule a visit while you are providing care for a child. This visit serves as an opportunity for your social worker to assess the situation and provide any necessary support or guidance. We have also requested that the child's social worker visits the child while they are in your care. These visits help ensure the well-being and progress of the child, as well as maintain effective communication between all parties involved in the child's care.

FINANCES

Your assessing social worker has likely already informed you that you may be entitled to an equipment grant. The grant amount is typically £400 per child for those over 3 years of age, or £750 per child for those under 3 years of age. This grant is designed to assist you in acquiring essential equipment and supplies needed to meet the needs of the children placed in your care. It can be used for items such as furniture, safety equipment, prams, and bedding.

Additionally, as an approved foster carer providing holiday and support care, you will be entitled to claim for the following:

- **Mileage:** You can claim mileage expenses for child-related travel, as well as for training and support purposes.
- **Hours worked:** This includes the time you spend caring for or being with the supported child, travel time to meet a child, and time spent in child-related meetings.
- **Activity budget:** Each support care arrangement may come with an allocated budget for activities to enhance the child's experience.

To find detailed information about the rates/amounts and how to claim for these expenses, you can refer to the 'Fostering Rates/Payments' and 'Support Care Rates/Payments' documents in the 'Resources – Finances & Money' section of the handbook here www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/local_resources.html.

HELPLINE

Our fostering service is committed to providing 24-hour support, every day of the year to ensure that you feel confident that you can contact qualified staff whenever you need support or there is an emergency.

If you require any advice, support or assistance, have a concern about the child or there is an emergency, please call the **Fostering Helpline on 0114 2056555** unless there is an immediate serious risk to the child or others, in which case, you must contact 999 first.

The Fostering Helpline operates between the hours of 5.45pm and 8.45am from Monday to Friday AM and from 4.45pm Friday to 8.45am Monday. The Helpline also operates 24/7 on Bank Holidays.

Please note that during office hours, the Fostering Helpline number is not available. If you need assistance during these times, please reach out to your own social worker, the social worker for the child, or contact **Fostering Duty at 0114 273 4940**.

For more detailed information about our Helpline and the support available to you outside of regular office hours, we recommend referring to the 'Helpline Policy for Foster Carers' document located in the 'Policy & Guidance' Resource section of our handbook www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/local_resources.html.

NOTIFYING US ABOUT SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

There are certain situations where it is crucial to inform us immediately via the helpline if it is out of normal working hours. These include:

- A child/young person is placed with you on an out of hours basis.
- If a child/young person goes missing, runs away, or you are concerned that they may have been abducted. This includes when the child/young person does not return home by the agreed curfew or has not been in contact with you as agreed and this is unusual, and you tried to locate them and waited a reasonable time frame for their age. In addition to this, follow the Children Missing from Care Policy and Procedure (www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/missing.html) You will also need to contact the police where there is a specific plan regarding missing episodes for the child (outlined, for example, in the child's Placement Plan or Safe Care Plan Child Specific Risk Assessment), follow that plan instead.
- If a child/young person makes an allegation of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect against anybody, including yourself or a member of your family, or you are concerned that abuse may have occurred.
- If a child/young person has an injury (which is beyond small accidental scratches or bruises on the children's arms or legs common for children of the same age) or causes an injury to others, or serious damage to objects.
- If a child/young person becomes very violent or out of control.
- If there is an incident involving the Police. Please ensure you record the name(s) of the police officer(s) involved, from which police station and the crime number (if appropriate).
- If you believe that a child/young person may have

been excessively drinking alcohol or using/supplying illicit drugs.

- If you believe that a young person may be involved in or groomed for child sexual abuse.
- If you believe that a child/young person may be involved in or about to become involved in a high-risk activity.
- If a serious accident or illness has occurred involving a child/young person requiring medical attention or hospitalisation; include the hospital to which the child is being taken. If the child/young person has already been treated, inform us at which hospital and the name of the doctor concerned.
- If you fall ill and are unable to care for a child/young person placed. If possible, we would ask in the first instance that you use your emergency agreed support network, however if this is not possible then the Service will identify an emergency support care placement.
- If a child/young person dies.
- If an emergency or other situation occurs in your family which means that you may be unable to continue to care for a child/young person.
- If emergency restrictions on contact made to protect a child/young person from significant risk are not being adhered to, e.g. if a person posing a risk to the child comes to your house.
- If there are significant issues with birth family and/or family time. You can also contact the Family Time Team on: 0114 203 9082 (Monday to Friday) or Out of Hours: 07827835111 or 07827835110.

ACCIDENTS

It is essential that you record any accident in which a child in your care is involved, how the accident occurred and what action you have taken. Always tell the child's social worker, your own social worker and the person with parental responsibility as soon as you can. If the accident occurs outside normal office hours notify the Fostering Helpline on 0114 2056555.

If the foster child has a more serious accident or sudden illness and requires medical or hospital treatment, consent to treatment will be required. Foster carers cannot sign medical consent forms. Therefore, you must have a form signed by the person with parental responsibility (this would usually be the child's parent/s or social work manager) giving their agreement to medical treatment readily available. This form should be handed to you when the child/young first arrives at your home.

Young people sixteen years or over give their own consent to medical treatment. Some children under sixteen years may also be able to give or refuse

consent if they are considered to have sufficient understanding.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Our fostering service organises regular support groups for foster carers to connect, share experiences, and receive guidance and support from our service. These groups are valuable for building a support network and learning from others.

All holiday and support carers are required to attend a minimum of two support groups per year. We offer various support groups held at different times and formats, including face-to-face and virtual options. Specific groups cater to Holiday and Support Carers, as well as those for BAME carers and for those caring for children with disabilities.

To access the complete list of support groups, including dates, times, locations, and further details, please refer to the 'Support Groups Dates and Info' document in the 'Training & Support' Resource section of our handbook www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/local_resources.html. Stay updated on any changes by checking the Foster Carers' Management and SCC Carers' Page www.facebook.com/groups/886420365113737/.

Make sure to mark the support group dates in your diary and take advantage of this supportive community to enhance your fostering experience.

SAFER CARE PLANS

Safer Care Plans are essential resources provided to foster carers to ensure the safety and well-being of both their family and the children in their care. They are necessary because of the differences between what is acceptable and what is not when caring for a child who is not biologically related to you, as compared to your own child or a relative's child. They play a critical role in safeguarding the child and protecting you from potential allegations.

You will help to create a Safer Care Plan for your family, which offers guidance on maintaining a safe environment and making informed decisions. Additionally, you will receive a personalised Safer Care Plan for each child you care for, outlining their specific needs, potential risks, and strategies to address them. Please ensure that you understand and follow these plans which will enable you to provide personalised care while keeping everyone safe. If you have any questions or uncertainties, consult your fostering social worker for clarification and support.

MENTORING

In addition to your allocated social worker and the opportunity to attend support groups, you will also be

assigned a more experienced foster carer 'mentor' who will offer guidance and support at the start of your fostering journey. Furthermore, some foster carers have expressed their willingness to meet newly approved foster carers informally. If you are interested in connecting with them, please inform your fostering social worker who will be able to facilitate this for you.

FOSTER CARERS' ID CARD

As a registered foster carer, it is important that you have been provided with a Foster Carers' ID card. This card serves as proof of your registration and can be used to access services and benefits available to foster carers. In situations where you need to identify yourself while supporting a child in your care, such as collecting them from school for the first time or taking them to a medical appointment, the ID card may be required. It is recommended that you carry the card with you when caring for or supporting a child outside the family home. Additionally, we suggest taking a photo of the card on your phone in case you forget to bring it with you, as some organisations may accept a photo of the card.

If you have not been provided with your ID card, speak to your fostering social worker who will organise it for you.

MANDATORY TRAINING

As a foster carer, it is expected that you are committed to ongoing learning and development. You will be required to complete all the mandatory training, which is listed in the 'Mandatory Training for Foster Carers' document located in the 'Training & Support' Resource section of our handbook here www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/local_resources.html.

Your fostering social worker will also provide you with a Learning and Developmental Plan that may include additional training requirements specific to your fostering role.

All face-to-face training sessions delivered by or via the Fostering Service can be found on www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/sheffield-fostering-training-and-development-43096759253. It is important to regularly check this website to register for mandatory training and any other training sessions of your choice.

Additionally, you can request a list of available e-learning options from your social worker or contact FosteringTraining@sheffield.gov.uk.

If you have specific learning needs or require recommendations related to your training, such as supporting a child with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, you can reach out to FosteringTraining@sheffield.gov.uk for guidance.

During supervisory visits, your social worker will discuss your learning, training, and development progress. To help them keep track of your completed training, we recommend that you maintain a list of all the training, learning, and development activities you have undertaken which you can share with them.

SKILL LEVELS PROGRESSION

As a foster carer for our Fostering Service, your payment is determined by your skill level. As a new foster carer, you will start at Skill Level 1 following completion of your pre-approval training, assessment, and approval at the fostering panel. You may progress to Skill Levels 2 or 3 with additional training, attendance at support groups, and involvement in the wider fostering community. Please refer to our 'Skill Levels Progression Document' in the 'Training & Support' Resource section of our handbook [here](http://www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/local_resources.html) www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/local_resources.html for more information on the requirements for each level.

DAILY RECORDS

As a foster carer, it is expected that you maintain daily records whenever you provide care for a child. These records are important for documenting the child's daily activities, behaviours, emotional state, and any concerns or issues that arise during their time in your care.

Daily records serve multiple purposes. They provide valuable information to social workers and other professionals involved in the child's care, enabling them to have a comprehensive understanding of the child's experiences and progress. Additionally, these records serve as a form of protection for you, as they can help defend against any allegations made against you by providing an accurate account of the child's care.

Your fostering social worker will explain the specific expectations for maintaining daily records, including the content and format required. It is also essential that you familiarise yourself with the 'Daily/Weekly Record' guidance saved in the 'Policy & Guidance' Resource section of our handbook www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/local_resources.html.

MEDICAL FORMS

As a foster carer, it is your responsibility to maintain an accurate and complete medication log for any medication given to a child under your care. This log can be downloaded from 'Forms & Records' Resource section of our handbook www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield/local_resources.html and should include details for prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, as well as

any vitamins or supplements given. When logging medication, be sure to include the name of the medication, the dosage, and the time it was given. Additionally, any side effects or adverse reactions experienced by the child should be documented. It is important to show the completed log sheet to your fostering social worker during their visits or send it to them electronically.

EMAILING CONFIDENTIAL DATA

To ensure confidentiality, we ask that you use only the child's initials in the main email body when sending us any information via email. If you need to attach a file containing the child's information, you have two options: either password-protect the file and send the password in a separate email, or send it through our secure email system which your fostering social worker will help you set up. In the event that you forget your secure email details, please contact us via email at CYPF_anycorrespondence@sheffield.gov.uk.

FOSTERTALK & FOSTER CARERS' DISCOUNTS

As an approved foster carer, we cover the cost of your membership with FosterTalk (www.fostertalk.org). This membership provides you with a range of free benefits, including:

- Coverage for your whole household
- Foster Care, Supported Lodgings & Staying Put support
- Legal insurance
- Fostering Helpline
- 24/7 Legal Helpline
- Tax, Benefits & National Insurance advice
- Discounted tax return service
- 24/7 Counselling support
- 24/7 Medical Helpline
- Shopping & Lifestyle discounts
- Members Magazine & Newsletters
- The FosterTalk Awards
- Home, Car & Business insurance quotes
- Education Advisory Services
- Financial advice
- Free online events

Through FosterTalk, you also have access to various discounts via the "You At Work" provider. You will receive a registration email to set up an online account with them. Once registered, you can explore a wide range of discounts, including those for supermarkets and activities.

ANNUAL TAX RETURN

Foster carers are classified as self-employed, which means you must register as self-employed with HMRC and file tax returns, even if you do not need to pay tax on your fostering payments. You can find more information about tax, National Insurance contributions, and benefits on www.fostertalk.org/tax-

[national-insurance-and-benefits-for-foster-carers](#) or call FosterTalk on 0121 828 6058 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) for free advice on any tax or payment-related queries. For a small fee, FosterTalk can assist you in completing your tax assessment, which would include any income unrelated to fostering that you may have.

ANNUAL REVIEWS

As a new foster carer, it is important to know that each year, your fostering service will conduct an annual review of your fostering journey. The purpose of this review is to evaluate whether your approval as a foster carer should continue and if any changes need to be made to your approval terms, if applicable. The review will be attended by a Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer (FRO) and your fostering social worker, who will prepare a report about your progress.

During the review, you will have the chance to look back on the past year, share your experiences, and receive feedback on your performance. It is an opportunity to celebrate your achievements and address any challenges you may have faced. The review also helps identify any additional support or training you may need as a foster carer.

Your social worker will agree with you the date of your first annual review.

As part of the annual review process, your social worker will update your Health and Safety Assessment. Additionally, your DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) and Self-declaration medical form will need to be renewed every three years.

TSDS

During your first year of fostering, it is a standard expectation for foster carers to complete a TSDS (Training Support and Development Standards) workbook. In exceptional circumstances, this timeframe may be extended to 18 months. The TSDS workbook is specifically designed to support your learning and development as a foster carer during this initial period.

The workbook will guide you through various topics and activities that are relevant to your role as a foster carer. It provides valuable resources to help you reflect on your experiences, enhance your understanding of foster care practices, and develop the necessary skills to provide high-quality care to children and young people.

To assist you with completing the workbook, one of our dedicated support workers will be in contact with you soon. They will further explain the purpose and process of the workbook, and offer their assistance and support to ensure that you successfully complete it. Your fostering social worker will provide you with further support.

REFER A FRIEND AND EARN £500

In our ongoing commitment to expand our fostering community, we encourage you to participate in our Refer-a-Friend program. If you know someone who has the potential to make a great foster carer, please refer them to us. For every individual you recommend who becomes an approved foster carer and have a child placed with them/starts providing support care, we offer a reward of £500. This is our way of saying thank you for helping us provide more loving homes and care to children and young people in need.

INSURANCE

If you have a car that you will be using to drive children within your fostering role, you must ensure that it has car business insurance or that your car insurance provider has confirmed coverage for foster carers.

If the child placed with you causes damage to your property, please inform your fostering social worker as the Council has Public Liability Insurance for these situations.

CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES

If there are any significant changes in your household, you must inform your fostering social worker. For example, if someone joins or leaves the household, if there are illness or health matters, involvement with the police, injuries or accidents, or changes in employment status.

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Fostering Duty – 01142734940. You can call this number during working office hours if you cannot reach your social worker and require assistance with a problem, need to report a significant incident/accident, or have general inquiries. If the number is unanswered, please leave a voicemail and a duty social worker will get back to you as soon as possible.

Fostering Business Support - 0114 2734941 You can call this number if you need to talk to somebody urgently and your fostering social worker or Fostering Duty is unavailable to answer.

Fostering Out of Hours Helpline – 01142056555. You can call this number to get fostering advice and guidance and report any significant incidents/accidents after 17:15 overnight until 8:45, all weekend and bank holidays including Christmas. A supervising social worker will respond from their home.

Emergency Duty Team/OOH – 01142734855. This is a helpline operated by children's social workers after 17:15 overnight until 8:45, all weekend and bank holidays including Christmas. Please use this line

only if you have been advised to do so by Fostering Duty or the situation is urgent and you cannot get through the Fostering Helpline.

Fostering Placement Finding – 01142734532.

Please call this number to inform the team that you have taken a new placement or a placement has ended or ask for an update on a child that you have been linked to.

Sheffield Foster Carers Handbook

www.fosteringhandbook.com/sheffield.

The handbook reflects policies, procedure and guidance for the fostering service which cover many common situations faced by foster carers on a day to day basis. It has also a list of local resources.

Support Team

SupportTeamInbox@sheffield.gov.uk.

Fostering Support Team deal with any enquiries/requests related to holiday care, day care, support care and short breaks.

Fostering Training

FosteringTraining@sheffield.gov.uk.

Fostering Training Team plan and offer advice regarding training and learning for foster carers.

Payments Team – 01142053528,

CYP_StrategicSupportProvider@sheffield.gov.uk.

This is used if you have any enquiries regarding payments.

Alexandra Hardy – psychologist

Alex offers support around complex behaviour and strategies.

Voices is a group run by representatives of foster carers who are the link between foster carers and fostering senior management – the group members gain feedback/views from other carers and inform fostering senior management about it; they are also consulted by the Fostering Service on various matter. They run regular drop-in sessions for carers – their details are posted on Management and SCC Carers' Facebook Page.

Family Time Contact Service - 9.00 – 5.00 Monday to Friday **0114 2039082**; outside these hours and weekends 0782 7835 111 and 0782 7835 110.

Foster Talk www.fostertalk.org. Each Sheffield Council foster carer has a membership with Foster Talk paid by the Council. The membership includes the following benefits: Fostering Helpline, 24/7 Legal Helpline, Tax, Benefits & NI Advice, Discounted Tax Return Service, 24/7 Counselling Support, 24/7 Medical Helpline, Max Card Discounts, Members Magazine & Newsletters, The FosterTalk Awards, Discounted Home, Car & Business Insurance, Education Advisory Services, Financial Advice and Free Online Events.

Foster Carers' 'Management and SCC carers' Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/groups/886420365113737

is a resource available for foster carers who are part

of the Sheffield City Council fostering service. The page is used by both foster carers and some staff members. The Fostering Service uses it to share information about a range of topics, including events, training, news, and placement/holiday and support care requests. Foster carers also use the page to post questions, recommendations, and news updates. You may find it helpful to join this Facebook page to connect with others in the community and access important information.