



One minute guide

Leeds Fostering Service

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What is Leeds Fostering Service?

Leeds City Council recognises that a child's needs are best met by a nurturing family and is committed to placing children who are not able to remain in their own family in appropriate alternative family-based placements wherever possible.

Fostering is where a child or young person between the ages of 0 and 18 who has become looked after lives with a foster carer in a family home. This is often temporary or short term, but is sometimes a long term arrangement.

The council's Fostering Service manages this work. The service aims to place children and young people within Leeds, in order for them to maintain contact with family members and friends, to continue at the same school and thrive within their community, where it is safe to do so.

The main areas of work for Leeds Fostering Service are:

- Recruiting and retaining foster carers – there is a dedicated team for this;
- Supporting existing foster carers – there are five teams of Supervising Social Workers, including one specialist team supporting [carers of children with complex needs](#), and four teams supporting mainstream foster carers;
- There is a separate [Kinship Care](#) service with dedicated teams for the assessment, supervision and support of kinship (family and friends) carers. Much of the training and enrichment support available is accessible for both foster carers and kinship carers.

How do people become foster carers?

The council has its own [Foster4Leeds](#) website and, through this, people are encouraged to register an interest in becoming a foster carer.

People over the age of 21 may apply to become a Foster Carer but those between the ages of 21 and 25 years would need to provide evidence of relevant transferable skills and/ or related experience. There is no upper age limit for foster carers. Interest is welcomed from all members of the community, regardless of relationship status, employment situation, class, gender, sexuality, culture, ethnicity or religion. Leeds is seeking to recruit more foster carers for all children, and particularly: those who can offer long term homes; care for teenagers; care for sibling groups; and those with the skills to work with children and young people with complex needs. There is immediate exclusion of any applicant who has been convicted of any serious offence against a child or adult.

There is an approval process, which starts with a conversation about fostering and is followed (if both parties agree to proceed at each stage) by: a home visit; training; preparation; and - if appropriate - the formal application and statutory checks, and a social work assessment known as a Form F. Assessments are presented to Fostering Panel who provide a recommendation and then sent to an Agency Decision Maker who finalises the approval.

Prospective foster carers must enjoy the challenges of childcare, and have qualities such as patience, resourcefulness, flexibility and a sense of humour.

What kinds of fostering placements are there in Leeds?

Foster carer placements can be for children of all ages, from babies and young children to older children and young people, including teenagers. All long term placement matches of children, young people and foster carers must be made by a fostering panel.

There are a number of different types of fostering placement in Leeds, including:

- **Short term:** this is a time-limited arrangement;
- **Long term:** this is for planned, permanent placements where a decision has been made that this is the best arrangement for the child or young person;
- **Short breaks:** this is planned, where children and young people stay with another foster carer as part of the child's plan;
- **Parent / Child assessment:** this is where the child and parent(s) stay together in a placement to help provide an assessment of the parents' ability to care for their child as part of an agreed plan. Residential and non-residential placements are available;
- **Support Care:** this is part of a package of support (including day care and child minding) where carers provide planned, time-limited support to maintain children within their families and prevent children coming into care;
- **Fostering for children and young people with disabilities:** this includes the same range of fostering placements as above, but the foster carers have specialist skills and experience of providing care to disabled children; and
- **Kinship Care:** this is where placements are provided by people already known to the child or young person and may be a family member or a friend. These placements involve family members or friends who have been approved by the local authority as foster carers. There is a separate service that assesses and supports kinship carers, special guardians and private fostering arrangements.

Key contacts or for more information

If you want to know more about fostering in Leeds you can access the [Foster4Leeds](#) website.

You can also read the Leeds City Council [Fostering Statement of Purpose](#) and the Children's Online Procedures – [Fostering](#).

Fostering Service tel: 0113 3783665 Fostering.Admin.Inb@leeds.gov.uk

Fostering Recruitment and Retention Team tel: 0113 3783538

FosteringRecruitmentAdmin@leeds.gov.uk or foster4leeds@leeds.gov.uk

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