



# iFoster

Lets Talk Fostering



CaritasCare

*Making lives better*

iFoster



i am Neil  
i am over 50  
iFoster

## Neil

"I was a lorry driver, away from home 6 days a week. I missed a lot of my own children growing up and I was determined to make sure that the same thing did not happen again with my grandchildren. My partner Marie has worked in a school for 23 years and I ran a Junior Football Club on Sundays. We both had so much to give children, and we knew that by becoming foster carers we'd be able to take part in our grandchildren's daily lives too. I became the primary carer at home, I couldn't believe my luck. I had to pinch myself. "

Hello,  
it's nice to  
see you.

By reading this brochure you have done what thousands of other have been afraid to do. You have decided to learn more about Fostering.

### Not just wonder about it... or talk about it...

but pro-actively gone out and got yourself the information you need to help you take your next step - in whatever direction that may be.

In our experience foster carers come from all walks of life. Each has their own story. There isn't an ideal age, ethnicity, or relationship status. Each foster carer is unique, as is every child who needs a foster family.

The one thing they all share is a desire to make a positive difference for a child (or children) who need a caring home.

We have also discovered that foster carers like to make their own decisions rather than follow the crowd. With this in mind we have tried to structure this brochure as more of a conversation than a lecture.

We've spoken with foster carers and support workers and of course children and we've tried to put ourselves in your shoes.

### What are the questions going through your mind?

To help us we've enlisted Jones family and Parker family. Case study names are as stated Neil and Steph, who have been in a similar place you are now.

We will let them tell you their story in their own words throughout this brochure as we explore the journey to becoming a foster carer.

But if there's any questions left unanswered just give us a call and we can make arrangements to continue the conversation face to face.

Let's start with a question we get asked all the time, and it may come as a bit of a surprise...

## Steph

"I've been fostering for about 10 years - perhaps a bit more! I used to work part time at Lancashire Fire Service but with the meetings it was difficult so I gave up work and became a full time foster carer. I'd always thought I'd like to be a foster carer but I thought they won't want me because I was single and had an only child. But it was actually my son Robert who saw an advert in the paper for fostering and he came to me and said 'can we have this one?'"

"I made Caritas Care my first phone call but I was on for an hour and then never went anywhere else. They turned all my perceived negatives into positives and I felt very good about it when I came off the phone. At that point I think I asked silly questions about going to our caravan, would the foster children be able to come with us? But I wasn't made to feel silly. They were very friendly."



# What's the difference between Fostering and Adoption?

Since you are looking for information on fostering there's a good chance you may feel that you already know the answer to this question but it's worth starting here.

**To be fair, viewed from the outside, both fostering and adoption have a lot of similarities and it's easy for the differences to appear blurred.**

You could say that adoption is about providing a family for a child, a safe home and a long term emotional relationship. But then some of our foster placements have lasted ten years or more and these children also benefit from living within a stable and secure family home.

### The real difference is that...

Adoption means you become a child's permanent legal parent, whereas fostered children are likely to have an ongoing relationship with their parents and family members. They will also have an allocated social worker who has responsibilities about their care.

Foster carers receive allowances whereas adopters generally do not.

There are lots of types and durations of foster placement and there may be some areas of foster care that may be better suited to you and your family than others.

But before we explore further it's worth being transparent from the very outset that every foster placement, regardless of type or duration, actually requires more than giving a child a safe and stable place in your home.

It is an ongoing process including paperwork, training and support meetings.

### It is, in fact, a very unique career.

It comes with a financial allowance (we'll talk more about that soon), huge support from a fantastic team (who we will introduce) and immeasurable personal rewards.

**It may be the most satisfying and rewarding experience of your life.**

But we want you to go into it fully informed. So let's get into some of the detail, let's have a reality check...

## Neil

"We had already paid off the mortgage so we weren't under any financial pressure. We knew we would get some money for looking after the children, but it just wasn't a concern at all. When I was running the Junior Football Club I met kids from disadvantaged families, they had nothing. We would take them home for a Sunday dinner. It meant the world to them and to me. It just felt amazing to be able to help. Fostering has been a natural progression of that."

# How will the Finances stack up?

We have established that foster care is a unique kind of career. Perhaps the kind of job you dreamed you would one day have, far from the regular 9 to 5?

Can you afford to feed another mouth at the table?

What if you have already retired?

If you have to be available for childcare and appointments, how will you be able to work?

What if you are on benefits?

A vocation through which you can **'give something back'**, share inspiring and uplifting experiences with your family and friends, meet extraordinary people and change the course of a young person's life for the better. **But reality creeps in.**

That's why our foster carers get paid an allowance when they have a child in their care.

The actual amount depends on the age of the child but it will cover the extra household bills and be enough to meet the child needs, from new trainers to savings for their future. It also provides a personal reward element for your commitment and dedication and we can talk to you about that in more detail if you want to have a further chat.

Some of our foster carers have other jobs and that's great, as long as you can prioritise the needs of your foster child,

if they are unwell for instance. Plus you'll need to attend meetings, appointments, training events and support groups throughout the year. Some of these can be held in the evenings, but others will be during the day.

You may be reading this and doing some mental 'checks and balances' yourself. Perhaps you are still keen to be a foster carer but aren't sure that your circumstances are a good fit right now?

We're always here to have a chat about your own situation and, if necessary, we can revisit the idea of foster care at a time more suitable for you.

In fact, time is an important consideration, and it's the second biggest concern for new foster carers.

So let's talk time...

# How will I cope with the duration of the placement?



## Steph

"I did work flexi-time two and half days a week. But it was difficult to do the school run and then on to work in the morning and the other way round at night. It was about an hour's commute twice a day. Then there was the meetings, training, illnesses, the usual stuff. It was difficult to fit everything in, so I made the decision to become a full time foster carer."

"The training differs in duration. There are training days and regular supervised visits where they get to know your whole life story. Mostly they are at Caritas Care and they are usually a day's course. It's all these bits of things that when you put them together... and I'm a single parent so it all falls to me."

Time is always in short supply and high demand. Finding a balance between what we want to do and what we have to do is a constant challenge so it's understandable that people approach fostering with some trepidation.

### Let's be honest, children take up a LOT of time.

Some people decide that they'll dip their toes in the water by offering Short Term or Respite Care which all have short durations whilst more permanent plans for the children are put into place

### But ...

Children sometimes do need a Short Term placement. Decisions about their future will be under consideration so their length of stay can be unpredictable and are likely to be needed at short notice.

However the majority of our children require Long Term or Permanent Care. Perhaps they have been unable to find adoptive parents or perhaps they are still in contact with their birth family and need somewhere safe to call home until they are old enough to live independently. Whatever the situation, we find good matches amongst our foster carers who are willing to step up to the challenge.

**If you do take that step, we can help you feel confident and qualified to be amazing foster families.**

**We do this in two ways:**

## 1. Training

Nobody wants to throw you in the deep end. It wouldn't help anyone, let alone the children. So once you enter into assessment to become a foster carer you will participate in 'Skills to Foster Training' and this will continue post assessment and beyond through advanced training, support groups and special events. People who have been foster carers for years attend training too. This helps everyone to learn and support each other.

It's not a one-size-fits-all approach either. We make it relevant to the individual placements, seeking specialist advice if required and offering ongoing one to one supervision to explore the issues and questions you have.

## 2. Support

Of course this begins with your own friends and family. It is important that you have someone you can reach out to for emotional or practical help. But do not doubt, we will be there for you.

Caritas Care have some of the longest retained foster carers in Lancashire (16 years being the longest) because we become your wider family. We are contactable 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We know you've made a huge commitment, the least we can do is match it.

## Neil

"Time wise it's been exactly as I expected it. You need to do the training and that's been appropriate for what we were taking on. At home we don't have loads of time to keep things all neat and in order. If you could stand in my living room now you'd see it's covered in kids toys and general messy family stuff. That's what I thought it would be like."

"I would turn up at Caritas Care for the training and I remember it was about Building Blocks and how some of the foster children needed help putting parts of their lives back together. I found it fascinating and when my foster child started to regress into a baby mode I knew she was just missing those Building Blocks. I knew it wasn't unusual or strange and most importantly, I knew I could help her"

When you become a foster carer for Caritas Care you're immediately allocated a Social Worker, you will more than likely know them well already from the assessment process. You will also have access to a dedicated Placement Officer, Support Worker and Education Specialist.

These are all people who will support you, pick up your calls, visit you at home, accompany you to meetings and much more. They are not only there to support you but the children living with you too. A Psychologist and Therapist can also be available so that together you can explore the best ways to support the child that you are caring for.

### The level of support you receive will be tailored to your needs.

Sometimes things are ticking along nicely and you need less from us. But should things become a little more challenging, we'll be there. In special circumstances we can even arrange respite care if that is needed.

Then there's the monthly support groups, the newsletter and the social events where you can meet other foster carers and get that all important fix of shared experience. We know that spending time with people who are in similar situations can help give a sense of belonging. Membership to the Fostering Network should also help in this regard.

### We haven't forgotten the children in all of this.

Not just the children you may foster but perhaps you have birth children too? We run support groups for both so that everyone in the family gets the helping hand that they need to enjoy the fostering process.

If you think about the impact fostering a child can make, it's not just to you. You may have a partner, children, parents, siblings, and even friends who are all going to experience changes.

And 'change' is a scary word. Let's talk about it...

# How will becoming a foster family impact on our lives?

The fact that you are reading this suggests you welcome positive changes and you're pro-active in making them. But you also have an acute sense of fairness and you know that becoming a foster carer isn't just going to impact on your own life, but that of the people around you.

## This impact can be extremely positive.

As with any children they will bring their own unique qualities and brilliant little personalities.

In fact if you speak to most foster families they will tell you that looking after children has been a privilege and that they and their families have got just as much out of the experience as they put in. Foster caring has enhanced their lives.

## Steph

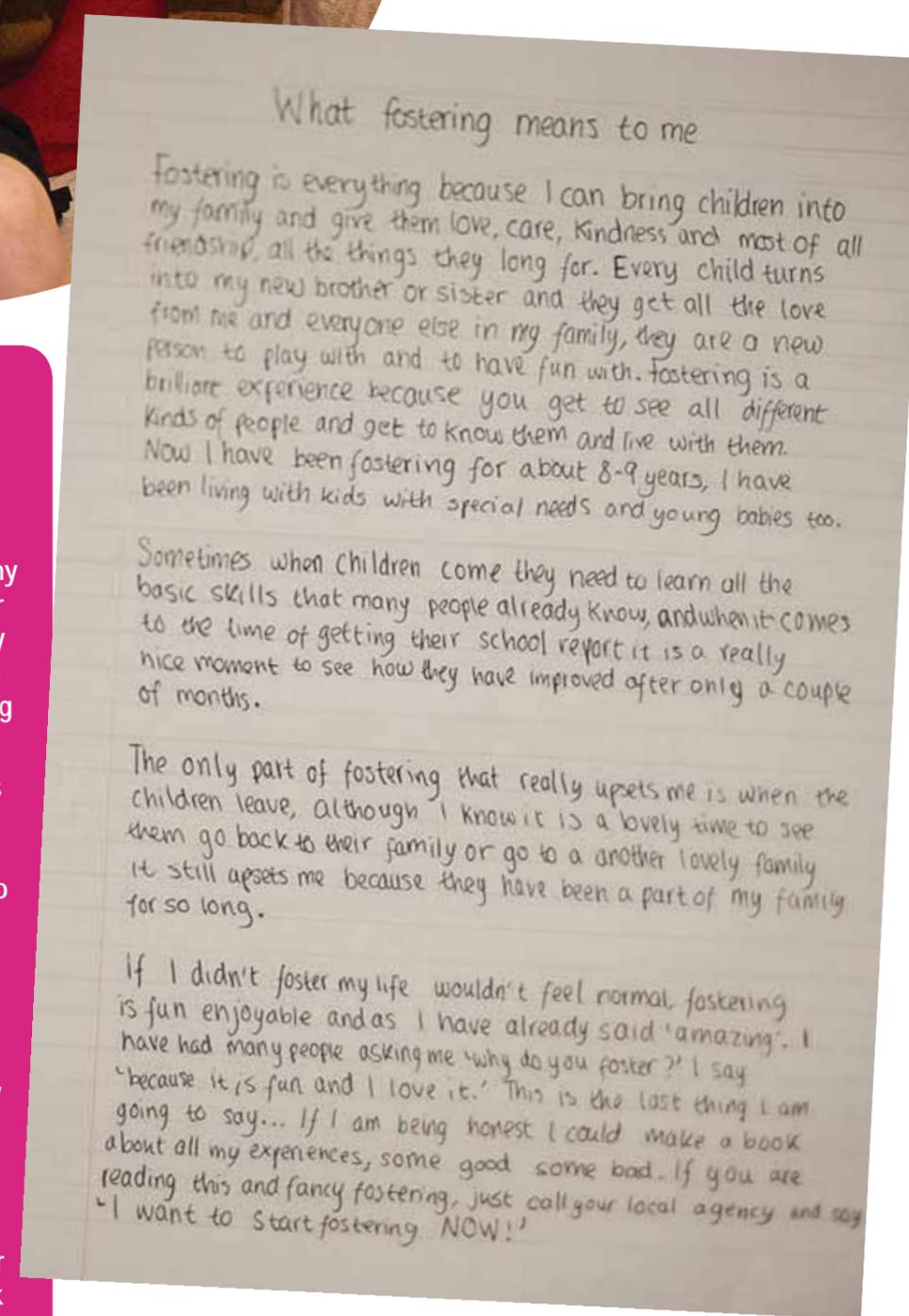
"In my case it's been very positive all the way. All my family, not just Rob but my mum and dad and my brother, the rest of the family. My mum likes being a foster grandma, they like the children, they can see Rob is happy, we all go on holidays together..."

"Before our first foster child left us I was concerned about how it was going to be. But I met his adoptive parents, they had dogs and a caravan and my foster child liked them and it built up and built up. So by the time he was going we were just really happy for him. We had a bit of a party to say good luck and I was surprised that I felt really happy for him."



## Don't just take our word for it...

Marlie is 13 years old and has two birth siblings and two foster siblings. Marlie wrote this piece and we publish it with her kind permission:



## Neil

"I can't explain it. I can't express how much I love being a foster carer. I love doing the school run. I give my foster child a hug and see her run off. I missed that with my own kids so I guess Fostering is helping me put my Building Blocks back too."

"But there are dark times. It's not all rosey rosey. But with Caritas Care there's always someone to help, someone to talk to and you get so much from being a foster carer. My own son was a bit of a jack-the-lad, expelled from his school. But we always believed in him. He's 22 now with a good job and every morning he still leaves the house and says 'I love you Dad'. At 22! That's what we hope we can do for our foster children. That's how we look at it."



## What is the actual process of becoming a foster carer?

**ASSESSMENT!** It sounds worryingly like a test doesn't it? But don't worry we will walk alongside you every step of the way.

**In truth there is a little bit of examination going on and that's because the welfare of children is so important.**

We need to know we've got the right people to care for them. If at any point we decide that we can't continue with your approval as foster carers, we will support you regarding this and explain the reasons fully.

We'll run official checks on yourself and anyone else over 18 who lives in your home. We start with criminal records checks. A previous offence would not necessarily rule you out but we need to know and consider it. We also make enquiries with Social Services, Probation and Educational institutions to check

there have been no concerns when it comes to children. We'll also ask you to undergo a medical examination and obtain a reference from your employer if you have one.

Then we get the views of your friends and family, through three written references. In some cases we will also speak to any previous partners.

We look around your home to do a full safety check. If we can offer advice to you on how to make it safer, we will. Some families have pets and these can be a bonus for a foster child. But if you own a dog we will arrange for it to be independently assessed to determine whether your pet would pose any concern around children.

### Neil

"We knew a neighbour who had 3 foster children and she suggested Caritas Care to us. My partner Marie made the first call. I'll always remember it, an absolutely lovely woman answered our call who just made you want to foster. I honestly can't say enough about the team at Caritas Care. They came for a few visits and they made us feel fantastic. Even now, three years down the line our Social Worker Lucy will call and text to see how we're getting on, if we fancy a chat about anything, if there's any training they think we'd benefit from."

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we talk to you and any other members of your potential foster family. Together we'll explore everything from your history to your hobbies because that way we'll get to know the real you and what you will bring to the table when it comes to fostering. We will talk about what age of child, what characteristics of a child (or children) would best fit into your family dynamic and why.

Once the Assessment is complete you will get to read it and it will be submitted to the Caritas Care Foster Panel for approval.

It would be great to see you at the Panel so that you can talk first-hand about yourself, your experiences and why you want to foster...

Once again we'll be right by your side.

### Steph

"I wasn't confident at first. I thought they won't want me because I'm single, because I work part time, because I have a son and my son has a disability. But the team at Caritas Care they made me see these things in a different light. For instance, they said that since I've been caring for Robert and his disability, I would be well skilled at helping other children who have their own unique challenges. So the process actually made me feel more confident, better about myself and what I was capable of offering a child."



i am Steph  
i am Single  
iFoster

# Who will be my foster child?

There is research that suggests that the decision to foster can take as long as two years to make. It's understandable, necessary even, so that you can move forward with fostering confidently, knowing it's right for you.

One of the biggest barriers to giving yourself that green light is fear, fear of the unknown. Right now your potential foster child is an unknown.

They may be any age from birth to teenagers. They may be from your local area or from the other side of the country.

Even as a placement match comes closer you are given the child's name, their particular needs and why they can no longer live with their own families. But it's still nerve wracking because all you're really seeing is an outline.

## Don't panic...

Soon you will know much more. You may see their passion for Everton Football Club. Or find out that they do a brilliant impression of Simon Cowell. Perhaps they love fish fingers, maybe they make a mean octopus from some toilet rolls and felt tips.

They are a child, just as you were once and they need exactly what you needed. To be safe, secure and cared for. To grow, learn and have fun.

And don't forget... you are unknown to them too. So why don't we let them tell you what they are hoping for in their next foster family. After all, we're in this together!

“I want a family where people will listen to me and I can feel safe.”

Josh Age 9

“I would like to live somewhere where I can play out and do lots of fun things – even go on holiday.”

Sophie Age 5

“A house with a computer would be fun or with a pet I can help look after.”

Ellie Age 11

“I have always wanted to have a bedroom of my own, where my things will be safe and I can choose how to have my room.”

Tyler Age 13

“I'd like to live with a family where there are other children I can play with.”

Jake Age 6

“Me and my little brother want a family we can live with together, we want them to be nice and kind to us.”

Chloe Age 15

## Neil

“We're usually given a little bit of the child's history, but it's mainly the broad strokes and I think it would help to have more information because it would help us to prepare better. You need the facts from the start.”



## Steph

“You don't know too much about the child before they come. Sometimes they may come for tea one night and you'll get to meet them before they come but mostly they just come to you and you just have a little background information that you've been given over the phone. You don't really know what to expect. You just focus on their needs. You just want to help them and do as much as you can. It is a lot of unknowns at that stage - but you do get to know them and you do bond with them. You just want what's best for them.”



## Neil

"One of our foster children had to leave prematurely because their birth family relocated and so they needed a foster family in a different geographical location. It wasn't something we could do anything about, it wasn't personal, it was just circumstances but it broke my heart. You do put so much into your foster children and we tried our very best for him. But we NEVER said we would stop fostering. There will be another child who needs our help just as much.

The support from Caritas Care was just amazing. If we called them at 3am or 4am it was no problem. It wouldn't matter when you called, they were always there to talk. They came up with brilliant ideas to help with school issues and have introduced us to psychologists if we've needed that extra space to talk. It's not just helped our foster children, it's helped me. I am so proud of what I do."

# What if the placement doesn't work out?

It is a question prospective foster carers often ask and they are right to, as breakdowns in foster care do happen... but they happen much less at Caritas Care than the national average.

**This is due to the very careful matching we've already discussed and our insistence that brilliant, dedicated foster carers are well supported.**

Your Caritas Care family will be with you every step, they will be aware if your foster placement isn't developing in a way that is positive for the child or for yourselves. They will talk to you throughout and guide the placement towards a resolution one way or the other.

A placement breakdown does not have to mean that you have reached the end of the fostering road. Many of our experienced foster carers have had placements that have simply not worked out or circumstances have changed, but their overall attitude to fostering remains incredibly positive.

## Steph

"Our first foster placement was very difficult. The child was quite volatile. I was very well supported by Caritas Care through it. The difficulties went on for a few weeks and it came to a head and I phoned Caritas Care and two support workers came out immediately. They were really good, talking it through. You wonder what you could have done? How could I have stopped it? But talking it through, someone to talk to too and offload and understand that these are the problems the child had. Caritas Care were very good."

"Robert, my son, was very supportive. He said 'You can't give up after the first go Mum' and he was right. I was dying to get stuck in with the next one. My next placement came for 18 months and was then adopted and we still keep in touch - Christmas cards and birthdays. The children that come are so different."

# Time to take A Time Out

Ok. We've told you an awful lot about fostering, and there's so much more to say. But because every foster family is a bespoke arrangement we will save the more specific details for a later conversation. And it may be that you're ready for a breather anyway!

So let's focus again on you. After all, that's where your foster story will begin and end. Now that you know a little more about fostering, its impact financially and emotionally...is fostering right for you, right now?

To give you a hand we've created this simple multiple-choice quiz. It will only take a few minutes and it might just help you to see the wood for the trees.

So why not settle yourself down, perhaps get a cup of tea, and let's begin!

You have been offered a new job. It's an exciting opportunity, you'd like to accept, but it would be a full time, long term commitment.

Do you accept?

- A No - I find it unrealistic to make long term commitments. Who knows what might happen?
- B Yes - But only after very careful consideration.
- C Maybe - I find it easy to start projects, but I don't always finish them. Let's see how it goes.
- D Yes - It sounds like the kind of role I can really get my teeth into and create a legacy.

You make arrangements to see a friend but at the last minute they call to suggest a whole new time and location.

How do you feel?

- A Excited - Change is an inevitable part of life. Change is good.
- B No problem - I am able to adapt with whatever comes next.
- C A little uncomfortable - I like to know what I'm doing ahead of time.
- D Very unhappy - If you make an arrangement you should stick to it.

You're planning a dinner party but it ends up looking more like a food fight.

Do you...

- A Make it work - It's not a Pavlova anymore - it's an Eton Mess.
- B Laugh about it - You've got to see the funny side of life.
- C Take a deep breath - Tidy up and try hard to get dinner back on track.
- D Get very frustrated and upset - This was not how you wanted the evening to go.

You're having a tough time at work do you talk to your partner, friends or family or do you feel you can cope with it alone?

- A I'm fine - I'm a grown up. I can deal with it by myself.
- B I talk to everyone about it - friends, family, my partner, anyone who will listen!
- C I don't really share things like that with my family or partner.
- D It's possible that I could go to my church or other community leader and seek some advice.

You've eaten a delicious dish and would like to try and make it at home.

Do you...

- A Take the recipe with a large pinch of salt. It's not really how they make it.
- B Use the recipe for guidance but make changes if you feel you have a better idea.
- C Follow the recipe, to...the...letter!
- D Go it alone - You don't need anyone else to tell you what tastes good.

What is it that you think Foster children principally need?

- A Rescuing
- B Parenting
- C Love
- D A playmate

Why do you think you would make a particularly good foster carer?

- A** I had a tough childhood myself. I know what they're going through and will be able to empathise and advise.
- B** I can offer a child some positive parenting and a safe and secure home.
- C** I'm all alone so I have lots of room in my life for the company.
- D** I believe we have a duty of care to other human beings who need our help.

You're at the shops when you realise you've left your purse or wallet at home. You only have the money in your pocket, enough for a fraction of what you were going to buy.

Are you:

- A** Very angry with myself - I wanted to get everything on my list.
- B** I'm fine - As long as I've got enough for the vital bits.
- C** I'm ok - But I go home and get the money I need to buy what I planned.
- D** Not bothered at all - Money doesn't matter.

So, how did you get on?

## Mostly A's

Mostly A's have a unique set of qualities that they bring to foster care. They are determined, unfazed by change and have a confident sense of self.

If you answered mostly A's then you are probably a very independent person who does not put too many expectations on others. This might work for foster care where you need to be personally resilient and embracing of its challenges but you also need to be open to the idea of working as part of a wider network of support for a foster child. Can you work in a team?

It's possible that you've had some personal experiences that would help you relate to a foster child and certainly your high

level of empathy would be a great skill in as a foster carer. Just make sure that your own history has not left you with negative emotions of your own such as anger, resentment or distrust. If you're not sure, why not speak to a counsellor or GP?

Fostering is not about rescuing children, in some cases it is about reuniting them with their family. You must be confident that you can be a positive parent figure whose role may be temporary, but in the child's best interests.

**A little self-reflection may be the next step on your fostering journey. Why not give us a call and come in for a coffee and a chat with us?**

## Mostly B's

Mostly B's are optimistic, easy going and adaptable which is a great combination for a foster carer.

If you answered mostly B's it would suggest that although you can look at a situation with a responsible and realistic eye, you like to look on the bright side of life. You're a happy person and a good sense of humour is essential in any family life!

You have a genuine desire to help others (which is not the same as rescuing them) and you have a lot to give whether that's in a team or by yourself.

If you are working towards a goal, you're able to adjust direction if the need arises which is important in foster parenting where situations and people can change. But if you are struggling you will not be afraid of asking for help and at Caritas Care, that support will be there.

If you answered mostly B's you can feel confident in moving forward with fostering.

**Have a chat with us over the phone and we can set up a time to get to know each other better. Together we can explore what the next steps could be.**

## Mostly C's

Mostly C's are careful, methodical and self-reliant which would be a great skill foundation for a foster carer, but there are a few warning signs here too.

Some people who answer mostly C's spend a lot of time by themselves and need to be aware that becoming a foster carer isn't a way to avoid being lonely. You may feel that this means you have a lot of love to give, and whilst that is a wonderful thing to provide, being patient, consistent and following through on rules and expectations are just as important. You may not always get to be the 'good cop'!

Your next step may be to examine your support network. Talk to your friends and family because it's important that you have people around you who will be there to enjoy your foster success stories and help you cope when times seem more challenging.

**If you are sure of your reasons and have people in your life who will be there to support you on your fostering journey then pick up the phone and give us a call.**

## Mostly D's

If you answered mostly D's then you are someone who has very clear expectations, deep loyalty and a sense of duty to others.

Viewing oneself as providing a necessary service to children and to society whether that's for religious or secular reasons is a positive reason for becoming a foster carer. But it's also a personal and emotional journey where you will need to bend from time to time, rather than break. Some foster children will test your patience and you cannot expect them to be grateful

or obedient. They did not ask to be put in this position and they may not feel that they owe you anything in return. People who answer mostly D's are not motivated by money or any self-gratification (though foster caring can have huge personal rewards) and it's a brilliant place to start your foster journey but it may be worth reading our case studies again and asking yourself - what do I expect?

**If you want to discuss the answers in more detail then give us a call and we'd be happy to chat with you.**

**Was that helpful?** At the end of the day, the quiz is just a tool to help you, to encourage you to examine your reasons for becoming a foster carer. If you're doing it for the right reasons you're more likely to experience the right outcome – a happy foster placement.

Regardless of whether you answered mostly A, B C or D, what is most important is that you are able to look at yourself and say 'my life is good. I am a reasonably happy person and I care about others'

If you can do that then you're nearly there. Nearly... because you're not making this journey alone.

**You're doing it with the Caritas Care team. So let's meet them...**

# The Caritas Care Family Tree

Throughout this brochure we've been following Neil and Stephs story of fostering. They are truly stars of our fostering team, but we thought you might like to meet all the cast and crew behind the scenes who have been there for Neil and Steph and would be there for you too.

We've devised this family tree so you can see how we're all related, how we all help one another to grow and support our foster placements.

## Head of Children's Services

I manage the Foster Care, Adoption, Concurrent Planning and Future Families for Children Services over 5 offices. I am also the charity's Designated Safeguarding Children Lead.

## Service Manager

I supervise and support the whole of the fostering team. I am also available to foster carers as they need me and will keep in touch with foster carers and children to seek their views about the work of the fostering team. I am always keen to hear new ideas and develop our service. I am responsible for lots of other tasks, such as making sure foster carer allowances are paid every week.



Rebecca Hughes  
Service Manager

Lucy Doughty  
Social Worker

Steph Stavert  
Social Worker

Ashleigh Robinson  
Recruitment &  
Placement Officer

Susan Swarbrick  
Head of Children's  
Services

Bernie Galt  
Senior Social Worker

Colette Perry  
Social Worker

Susan Butterworth  
Education Specialist

Sharon Bassa  
Social Work  
Assistant

## Senior Social Worker

My role is very varied and includes assessing new foster carers then supporting them after approval offering advice and guidance. Along with the rest of the team I help to deliver training and take part in support groups. I am also a member of the fostering Panel.

## Social Worker

The role of a supervising social worker is to offer you and your family support and guidance throughout your fostering journey.

We will explore with you the child's needs, and identify ways that we together as a team can meet these.

## Social Work Assistant

As a Social Work Assistant my role is to assist the team, foster families and children in placement in a variety of ways. I spend time supporting young people in placement through direct work, supervising contact and arranging children's support groups and activities. I am involved in delivering training to carers and children, being involved in our recruitment events and attending meetings on behalf of the team.

## Education Specialist

My role is to ensure that I work with the foster carers to find a supportive, nurturing school where the child can achieve their best academically but also feel happy and secure. I offer continued support in all education matters and liaise with schools to offer training and advice.

## Recruitment & Placement Officer

Role as recruitment and placement officer is to manage and book events and promotion days to raise awareness for fostering and provide anyone with more information who is interested in becoming a foster carer. I continuously update and manage advertisements and social media activity. Manage placement requests from Local Authorities and match them with any suitable vacancies we have. To complete and update all carers profiles and family books and assist with training, activity days and as with all other team members, support any placements in anyway necessary if needed.





Contact iFoster Today on:

**0800 652 6955**

for an informal chat or visit our website

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