

YOUR FOSTERING JOURNEY STARTS HERE.

Help a child feel safe, supported and ready to grow, with us alongside you every step of the way.

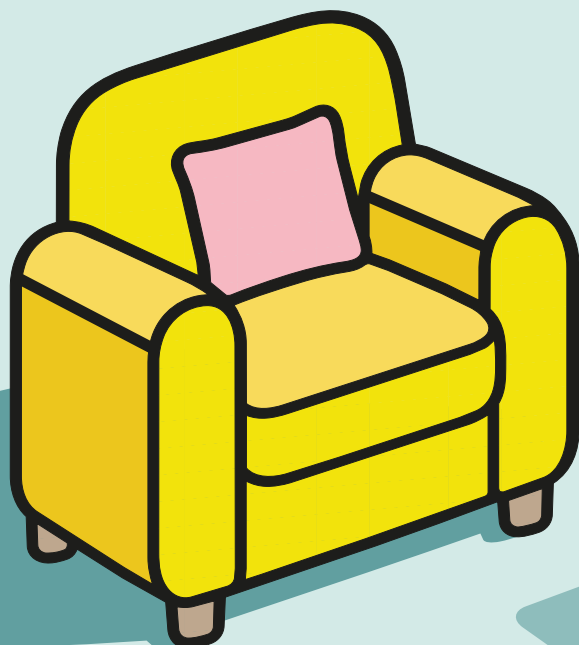


The Role of a Foster Carer

Becoming a foster carer means providing a safe, stable and caring home for a child who cannot live with their family. At a time when a child's world may feel uncertain, foster carers provide reassurance, routine and a sense of belonging.

As a foster carer, you will support a child with everyday life including school, activities, friendships, health appointments and family time. You will also provide emotional support, helping children build confidence and feel valued.

Many children have experienced loss, change or trauma. You do not need to have all the answers, but patience, understanding and consistency can make a lasting difference. You will work alongside social workers, schools and other professionals as part of a team focused on achieving the best outcomes for the child.



"It's making a difference. That is the biggest highlight. If a child feels safe and secure in your home, they will learn to grow."

- Rachael, Foster Carer



The Children Who Need Foster Homes

More than 360 children are currently in care across North Somerset. They range from babies to teenagers and include sibling groups, children with disabilities and young people from a variety of backgrounds.

Children come into care through no fault of their own. Reasons may include family illness, family crisis, neglect, abuse or situations where parents are temporarily unable to provide safe care.

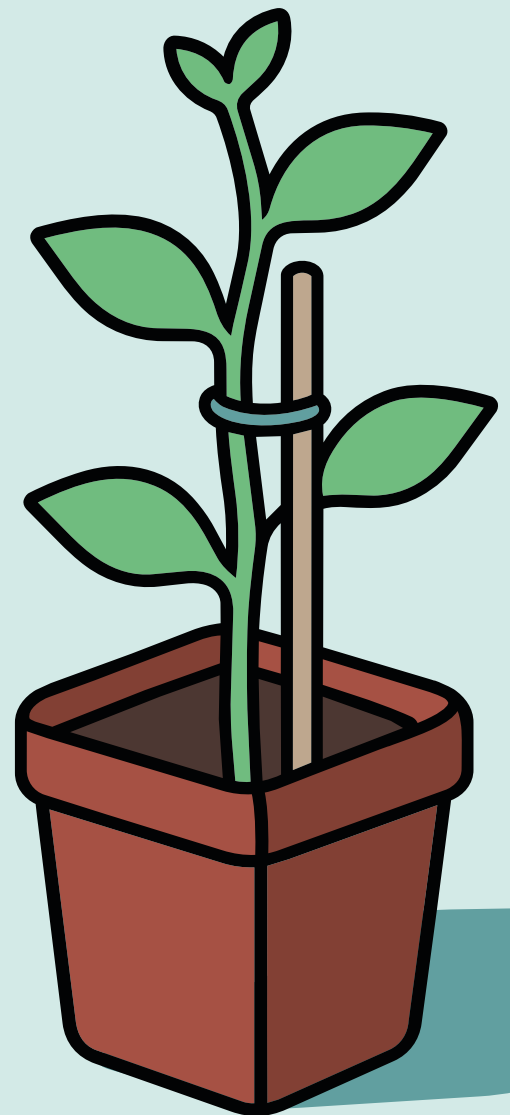
Some children stay in care for a short period before returning home, while others need longer-term support through fostering or adoption. Every child is different, but all need stability, encouragement and someone who believes in them.

Understanding Children's Needs

Children entering care may have experienced significant disruption in their lives. Separation from family can affect emotions, behaviour and trust.

Some children may need support with education, health or emotional wellbeing. Others may have experienced missed opportunities or developmental delays. With the right support, children in care can thrive and reach their full potential.

We carefully match children with foster carers by considering the child's needs, interests and experiences alongside the strengths and circumstances each foster family.



What Type of Fostering Is Right for You?

We offer a range of fostering opportunities to suit different lifestyles and circumstances.



SHORT BREAKS CARE

Planned support during
weekends, holidays or regular
daytime sessions.



WEEKENDERS

Caring for a child one
weekend each month.



SHORT-TERM FOSTERING

Providing a temporary home
while plans are made for the
child's future.



LONG-TERM FOSTERING

Offering a stable home
until adulthood.



SPECIALIST FOSTERING

Supporting children with
more complex needs.



SUPPORTED LODGINGS

Helping young people
aged 16–18 develop
independence skills.

Our team will help you find the right type of fostering for you.

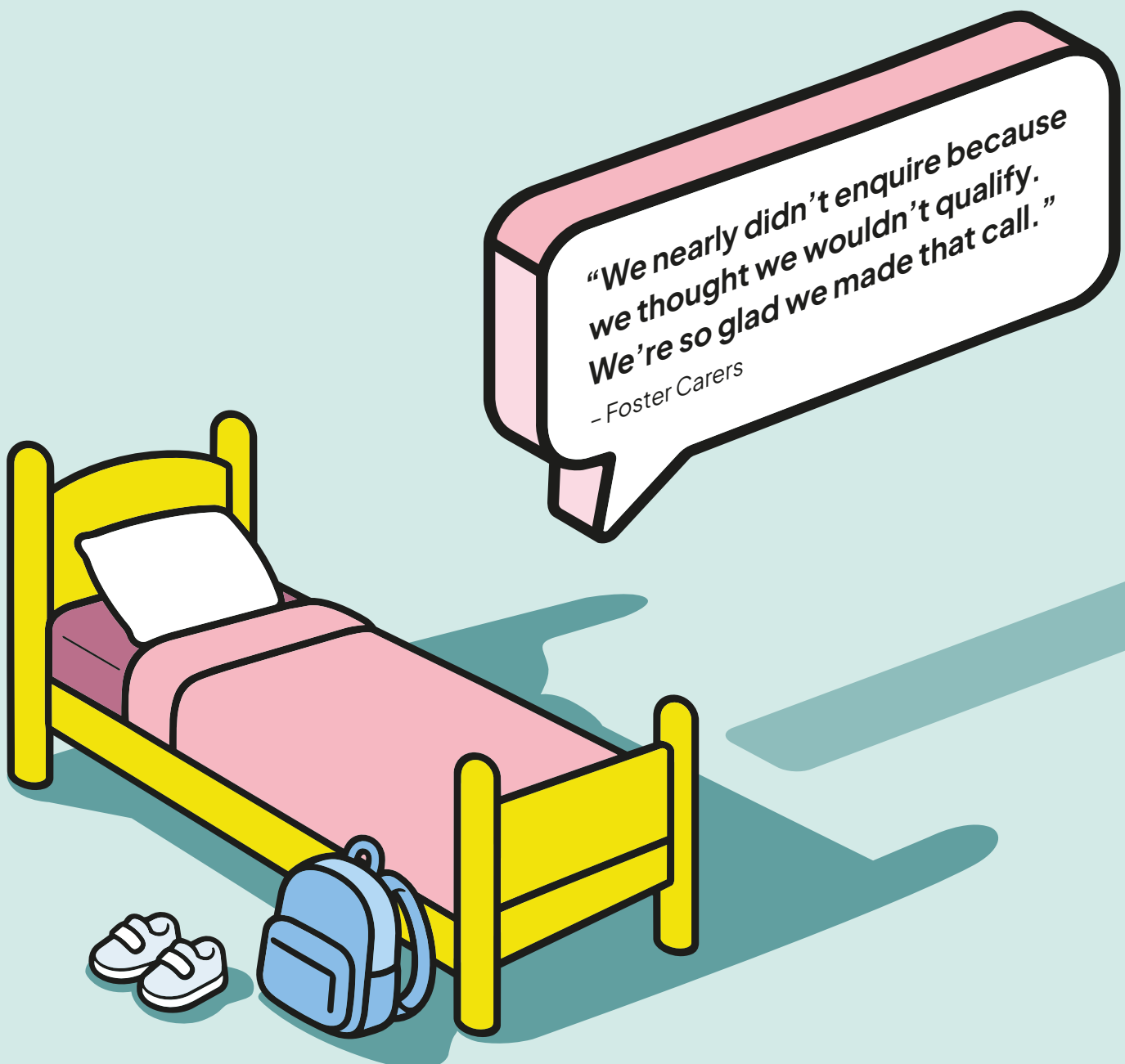
Could You Become a Foster Carer?

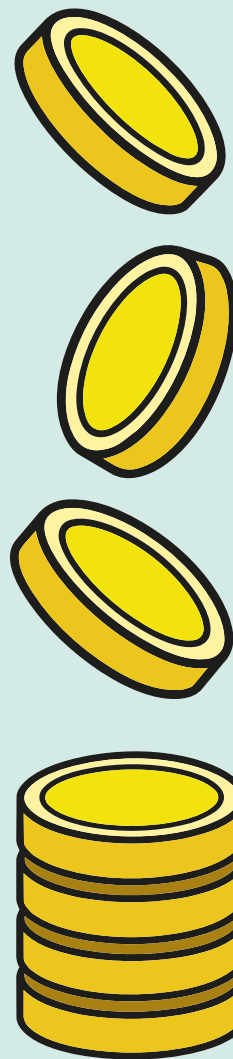
We are looking for people from all walks of life. You can apply whether you are single, married, in a relationship, working, retired, renting or owning your own home.

You will need a spare bedroom, be aged 21 or over and be able to provide time, energy and commitment to a child.

Good foster carers are patient, resilient, caring, open-minded and willing to learn.

Certain factors may affect an application, including some health conditions, criminal convictions or housing arrangements, but we encourage anyone interested to get in touch for a confidential conversation.





Financial Support and Benefits

Foster carers receive financial support to help meet the needs of the children they care for.

This includes a weekly fostering allowance and a skills-based fee structure that recognises experience and training.

Additional benefits include council tax discounts, access to local leisure centres, membership of The Fostering Network and access to Blue Light discounts.

Our fostering community also offers events, support groups and opportunities to connect with other carers.

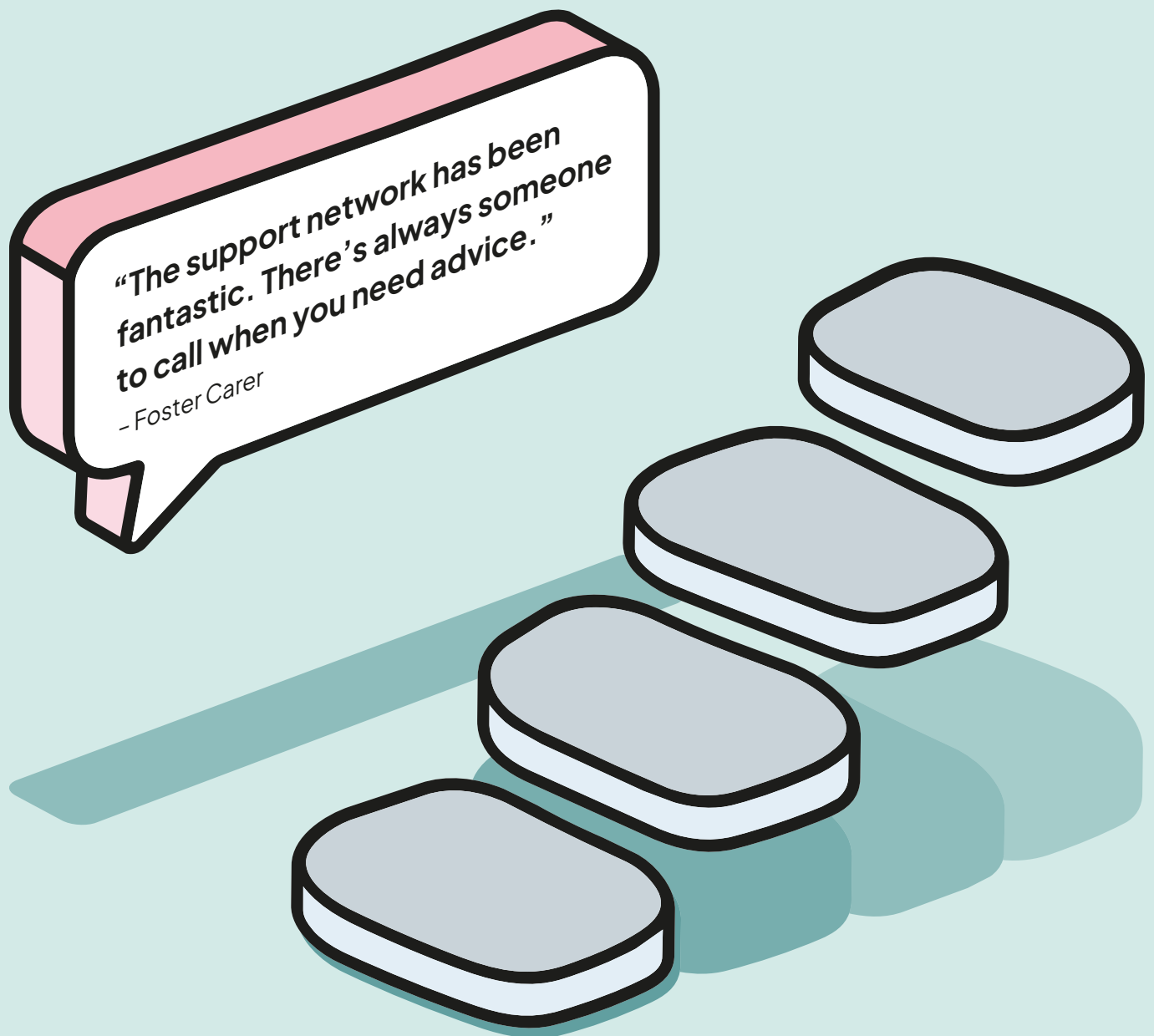
Support Every Step of the Way

When you foster with North Somerset Council, you become part of a wider support network and will be embedded within the local fostering community.

You will have a dedicated supervising social worker, access to out-of-hours support and guidance from professionals in education, health and emotional wellbeing.

You may also benefit from the Mockingbird programme, which connects foster carers through a supportive local network.

Independent counselling is available for foster carers and their families, alongside regular events and peer support opportunities.





Training and Development

Training helps foster carers develop confidence, knowledge and practical skills. Before approval, prospective carers attend Skills to Foster training. Once approved, carers complete foundation training and work towards the Training, Support and Development Standards.

Ongoing courses cover areas such as safeguarding, first aid, child development, trauma-informed care and behaviour support.

As your experience grows, opportunities for further development and higher skill-level payments become available.

Your Fostering Journey and FAQs

The fostering journey usually begins with an enquiry and an informal conversation. Following a home visit, applicants complete an assessment process, references and checks before attending panel and approval.

Can I foster if I work?

Yes, depending on the type of fostering.

Do I need children of my own?

No.

Do I need to own my home?

No.

Is there an upper age limit?

No.

Are foster carers paid?

Yes.

What is the difference between fostering and adoption?

Adoption transfers parental responsibility, fostering does not.

*"The assessment felt thorough,
but it helped us realise we were
more prepared than we thought."
- Foster Carers*

Take the First Step

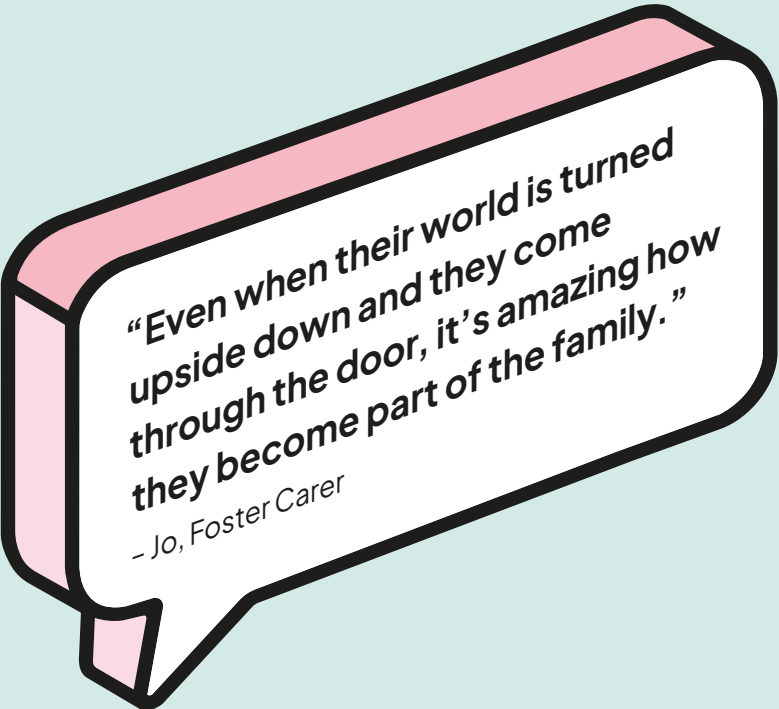
Foster carers change lives every day by providing safety, stability and encouragement to children who need it most.

Whether you are just beginning to explore fostering or feel ready to apply, our friendly team is here to support you.

Contact us:

01934 421900

fostering@n-somerset.gov.uk



“Even when their world is turned upside down and they come through the door, it’s amazing how they become part of the family.”
– Jo, Foster Carer



“Seeing a child relax, laugh and feel safe in your home for the first time is something you’ll never forget.”
– Foster Carer



**For more information
and advice, please contact:**

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Weston-Super-Mare
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Tel: 01275 888 999

Email: fostering@n-somerset.gov.uk

Website: fostering.n-somerset.gov.uk

