You can make a difference to the life of a child

Fostering for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
Call us on 020 8227 5988
Could you make a difference

Each year there are many children and young people in Barking and Dagenham who cannot live at home within their own families. The fostering team have the job of finding these children and young people an alternative family where they can live until they can return home or leave care.

In Barking and Dagenham we aim for all of our children to be safe, stay healthy, enjoy life and achieve in their education. We want them to be able to make a positive contribution to the community achieving employment and becoming independent able adults in the future.

To achieve this aim we need your help. We need people from all backgrounds, cultures and ethnic groups who are willing to become foster carers - caring for a child in their own home.

Open your heart and home. We would love to hear from you.

You will need to have the space and time for a child in your home and your life.

You will also need a good sense of humour and a caring nature.

If you can provide a safe and secure home, maybe you could foster a child or young person. With regular training and support, fostering a child can be very rewarding.

Call us to discuss this further on 020 8227 5988.
Types of foster care

There are several differing roles provided by foster carers. Below is a summary of the type of fostering that you can be approved for with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Long term placements
Many foster carers have a definite interest in providing placements for children, young people or sibling groups on a long term or permanent fostering basis, usually for the remainder of their childhood.

Bridging placements
This generally forms part of a longer-term plan for a child or young person. In these cases, foster carers work with the children or young people to prepare them for joining adoptive or long term to permanent fostering families or for moving to semi-independent or independent living.

Assessment placements
These usually last up to three months during which time a detailed assessment is made of the needs of the child or young person and the specific support services they require.

Short term placements
Foster carers work with the child or young person and their families for a short period of time after which the child will either return home or move on.

Emergency placements
Foster carers are able to accept unforeseen emergency placements for individual children or sibling groups, 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Parent and child placements
Placements for mothers and/or fathers and their child, where foster carers can provide guidance to parents and help them develop parenting skills.

Solo placements
Provide a higher level of support, supervision and care for children and young people whose needs are very specific and complex.

Remand foster carers
To provide these specific placements, we need carers who are able to look after young offenders on a short-term basis, sometimes just overnight. Placements can be made with very little notice, maybe on the same day. Alternatively, placements may be made on a more planned basis, for example for young people leaving custody.

Short break foster care
Very short term care for disabled children in order to help support a family. This may mean looking after a child, or sibling group for anything from a couple of days, weekends, to a week or two at a time, sometimes on a regular basis.

Call us to discuss the types of foster care further on 020 8227 5988.
What do foster carers do?
Apart from looking after children on a day-to-day basis and meeting their many needs, foster carers come into contact with and work alongside other people who play an important part in the life of a child.

Most important among these is the child’s family. Foster carers have a vital role to play in helping people keep in contact. Others would include social workers, teachers, doctors and health visitors and occasionally members of the legal profession.

Don’t panic – foster carers work as part of a team and help is always available to support you with these important areas.

What qualities would I need?
It may sound silly, but foster carers will need to like children and keep liking them despite what may happen. Foster carers need to be patient, understanding, tolerant, flexible, open-minded, energetic, have a sense of humour and be prepared to stick with it.

We recognise this list can be demanding, so we offer regular training and support groups to aid your role.

What you can expect
Foster carers give generously of their time and effort, yet may feel they are getting little back. Carers may not see the benefit of their hard work for a long time as each child will develop, adjust and progress at their own pace. However experienced carers will look back and see the real difference they have made to the lives of children and young people.

From Barking and Dagenham you will receive support, supervision, training, guidance, nurturing and professional recognition too. We have received two inspections from Ofsted (in 2008 and 2011) and each time we were judged an ‘outstanding service.’ Why not join us?

Do I need to be married to become a foster carer?
No, you do not need to be married or living with someone. However, you might want to give some thought about the support network you have. Who could you turn to for practical support?

What if I don’t live in a house?
It does not matter if you live in a house or flat as long as the property is in your name and you have the facilities you need to look after a child or young person. We like to make sure a child or young person has their own bedroom wherever possible. Children and young people need a safe and caring environment to grow up in, and teenagers in particular need their own space. However babies up to the age of three can stay in your room in their own bed.

What if I haven’t got children myself?
We need different carers for different children. Sometimes not having other children in the placement will benefit the foster child.

What about my age?
For most foster carers it is important they have had some life experience and so we generally prefer them to be at least 25 although we will consider each application on its own merits.

Can I foster and still work?
We require one carer per household to be available at all times and not in work for all types of foster care except short break foster care.

What if I have a criminal record?
Having a criminal record does not mean you cannot become a foster carer. If you have a past or current conviction, you must discuss it with the social worker who visits you, before you decide to go ahead with your full assessment.

Once we have received your application form we will contact you. We will ask a few questions and give you the chance to ask any questions you may have. If you meet the criteria one of our specialist fostering workers will make contact to arrange to visit you.

The worker will be able to answer any further questions you may have as well as giving you an honest view as to whether we believe fostering is right for you and your family.

If, following the initial visit you are still interested in becoming a foster carer and we think you are right for us we will begin checks and we will arrange for you to go on a mandatory training course which is run over four consecutive Saturdays. This may lead on to a full assessment. We can tell you more about this process during our initial visit.

Call to discuss this further on 020 8227 5988.
Barking and Dagenham Placement Service
Fostering Team
Placement Services
3rd Floor, Roycraft House
15 Linton Road
Barking
Essex, IG11 8HE

For more information please contact us;
Phone (Mon - Fri, 9am to 5pm):
020 8227 5988
Phone (out of hours):
020 8227 5949
Email: fostering@lb bd.gov.uk
Web: www.lbbd.gov.uk/fostering