

Training and Support

We know that being supported in your role is important so that you feel part of a team. You will be visited regularly by your Short Break Fostering Social Worker and occasionally visits should also be made by the child's Disability Social Worker when you are looking after your "linked" child.

You will also be able to join in any of the training or support events available to full time foster carers; these include a range of training courses, a regular newsletter, and support from Clinical Psychologists. There also may be specialist courses which are more specifically relevant to your needs as a Short Break Foster Carer. Specific requests for training around the needs of an individual child will be explored alongside training in autism and managing challenging behaviour.

Arrangements

Once you have had a series of introductions and you, the family and the child agree to move forward, a pattern of overnight stays will be arranged. The details of the plan will be fully written down in a placement/care plan.

You will be able to contribute to this in a planning meeting. Each 'session' carries a flat rate fee. The fee is payable for each overnight stay and these usually start one morning ending the following tea time.

Can I Talk To Someone About My Interest?

We are always happy to discuss becoming a Short Break Foster Carer and if you call the telephone number below, we will arrange to visit you at your convenience.



PUT
YOURSELF
IN THE
PICTURE

Telephone: **01472 326292 option 2**
Email: **fosteringandadoption@nelincs.gov.uk**
www.nelincs.gov.uk/fostering

How to Become a **SHORT BREAK**
Foster Carer

What Is Short Break Foster Care?

Families who are bringing up a child with disabilities often find it very difficult to have time for themselves to do simple things.

Short Break Foster Care provides a welcome opportunity for families to have a rest from their caring role, and time to relax and recharge a little. For the child or young person it offers a chance to have new experiences in a safe and caring environment.

Could I Do That?

Lots of different people are able to provide short break overnight care in their own homes; they need to have a warm and supportive approach, ideally with some experience of caring for people with learning or physical disabilities. Most children who use the Short Break Fostering Service are those with a moderate to severe learning disability; Short Break Carers need to have a positive attitude to encourage young people to develop new skills and interests. Regular stays with a pattern of visits which is predictable works best. Carers usually provide one weekend stay per month but it may be more often if there is a higher level of need. Carers have also to be aware of the importance of working in harmony with the child's birth family.



How Do I Become a Short Break Foster Carer?

Anyone looking after a child overnight as a Short Break Carer must first go through full preparation and assessment, like any other foster carer.

There is a programme of preparation training entitled "The Skills to Foster" which is followed by a home study assessment. A Fostering Social Worker will meet you and your family to get to know you and your background through a series of visits. A comprehensive report is collated for you to see and comment on. It is then presented to the Fostering Panel for a recommendation about your suitability to become a foster carer.

There will be enhanced police checks taken and also a range of personal references and statutory checks on all applicants.



Who Decides Which Child I Care For?

Children with disabilities will be identified for a Short Break Service following assessment of the family circumstances by the Children's Disability Team.

A child and family may be supported by out of home activities with befrienders or in North East Lincolnshire Council facilities offering clubs and regular activities. Once the kind of services needed have been agreed, there will be a matching of need for overnight care with the skills and experience of an approved Short Break Carer.

You will be given an outline of the needs and circumstances of any child matched with you and a meeting will be arranged for you to talk with the family to explore if this "match" looks promising. Your Fostering Social Worker and the child's Disability Social Worker will help you through this process.

Working With Birth Families

Building a good working relationship with a child's own family is a very important part of a Short Break Carer's role. Helping parents to feel valued and supported is one of the aims of a Short Break Fostering Service.

The Short Break Fostering Social Worker will work with you and the child's family so that good communication and shared aims are supported. The child's parents remain in full control of their child in terms of parental responsibility during a short break stay and matters such as having a hair cut or going to a health appointment are for birth parents to carry out. Occasionally the complex needs of a child or the number of overnight stays in one year may mean that for the period of being cared for out of the home the child will become "looked after" by the Local Authority. In these instances the parental responsibility will be shared between the parents and the Local Authority. You should always be clear what you are able to decide and what is for the parent or Social Worker to decide.