

Types of Placements Provided

Focused Fostering Services are an approved supplier of fostering services with the London Councils (formally Pan London). Foster carers are approved as Short-Term, Long-Term; Respite, Remand, Unaccompanied Minors, and Parent and Child and can care for children and young people within the age range for which they are approved.

Emergency Placements

This service provides emergency care, immediate safety, security and comfort when there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, until suitable arrangements can be made either with the child's relatives or an identified foster placement.

Short Term Fostering

Short-term placements could involve a period of days, weeks, months or and period of time up to two years. Short-term placements are never initially planned to be long term or permanent. Prior to, or upon placement the viability of rehabilitation home is assessed by the child's social worker and a care plan is devised accordingly. This care plan is regularly reviewed through different forums, i.e. Statutory Reviews, Supervision and the Child Care Planning Panel. The review of all care plans includes consultation with the child/young person, parents and carer.

Remand Foster Carers

Remand foster carers take on responsibility for young people who are remanded by the Courts into Local Authority care. Young people are remanded for specific periods of time - usually a few weeks, so placements are generally short term. The remand foster carer works closely with the workers in the Youth offending Service in supporting and helping a young person to make positive changes in their life. Remand foster carers need to have experience of teenagers or the Youth Justice system.

Carers must have full-time availability and be able to offer placements at short notice. They will need to accompany young people to court and police stations on a regular basis, and other meetings/appointments as required. Ideally this needs to be a household where there are two carers.

Unaccompanied Minors

Unaccompanied young people come from different parts of the world, predominantly from countries in Africa and more recently from Afghanistan. We are particularly interested in recruiting people from within the relevant communities in Croydon who understand the cultural needs of these young people and speak their languages. However, we are also recruiting potential carers within the indigenous community in Croydon who are interested in caring for these young people. Under current legislation, the likelihood is that many of these

young people will have to return to their countries of origin when they reach 18, and foster carers therefore have a difficult task in preparing them for what this may mean.

Respite Care

We are in the progress of developing a service for respite placements for disabled children and those with additional needs. The aim of this service is to offer short-term family based care to disabled children and young people, or have a severe medical condition. Should special equipment be required in order to facilitate and maintain this type of placement then it is expected that the cost of this will be met by the placing authority

- Achieve flexible responses to disabled children and their families
- Reduce risks of family/placement breakdown
- Prevent the need for long term accommodation
- Provide day care or overnight stays

Long Term Fostering (Permanency)

For some children, often those who maintain close and significant relationships with birth parents or relatives, long term fostering may be a more appropriate option than adoption. Foster carers can be approved as long term foster carers for these reasons.

Ideally, children in short term foster placements return home, but if rehabilitation is not possible, adoption may be considered for children aged ten years and under. For older children, alternative permanency plans will be made and this often includes long term fostering.

Occasionally, short-term foster carers ask if they can offer a permanent home to a child they are looking after. In these instances, a full assessment is always undertaken to establish if this is the best option and plan for the child. If adoption or long term fostering is considered to be in the child's best interest, foster carers undergo the same assessment process as another prospective adopter or long term foster carer.

Children with Learning Disabilities

These placements are for children or young people with disabilities. The young person or child may be suffering from conditions such as Downs Syndrome, Autistic Spectrum, Asperger's, Attention Deficit Disorder.

Support and provision provided for these placements are inclusive of everything that is stated within the standard placement. Should respite be required then this will be discussed on an individual basis and the cost of this will be discussed with the placing authority. Focused Fostering will do its utmost to find a carer within its own resources, but this may not always be possible.