

Welcome to August's Thinking about Fostering? Newsletter



I'm Denise, the fostering team manager and my job is to ensure that you're supported and listened to at every stage of your fostering journey, from finding out more at our events, or in our newsletters, to going through the assessment!

Our newsletter is for the many people who are 'thinking about fostering'. It's a huge decision to make with lots of different things to consider including your family, space at home, and what time you have available, just as a start!

At Leicestershire County Council, my team are here to help, advise and support you with information that will help you to decide if, and when, fostering may work for you. We are not here to encourage you to foster, but more to support you to decide if now is the right time for you to progress.

So, we send out case studies, stories of people's experiences of the application process and subsequently becoming carers along with many other interesting facts straight to your inbox.

Please feel free to get in touch for any further information, or to suggest content that you think could be useful for anyone thinking about joining our fostering family!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath the name.

Meet Foster carers: John and Michelle



There are currently 684 children and young people in Leicestershire looking for somebody to care for them. We spoke to John and Michelle who are two of our foster carers and asked them about their fostering journey

They have four daughters and have followed in Michelle's parent's footsteps who fostered over 400 children!

We asked John and Michelle the following questions:

When did you start fostering?

We were approved for fostering in January 2021 by an independent fostering agency. In November 2021, we transferred over to Leicestershire County Council.

What's the assessment like/panel experience?

It's not as bad as you might imagine! It's short and over in a flash. During the panel meeting, you are asked questions but they're not there to trip you up. They want you to be successful.

What's it like fostering children alongside your other children?

It's no different, they're all treated exactly the same. They're family. Everyone gets the same, for example birthday and Christmas presents.

What sort of fostering do you do?

We do all different types of fostering! We foster new-born babies as part of parent and child fostering, toddlers, young children and teenagers. We do short and long-term fostering as well as emergency and respite.

What are the best bits of fostering?

We're excited when we get a call from the fostering team! We love to see the real child/young person grow and develop. It's lovely to know that we are making a difference. When they move on, it's nice seeing them and hearing how well they are doing.

What are the challenges?

We hate saying goodbye, but often we stay in touch. Sometimes children/young people can be upset if their parent doesn't turn up to see them for a contact meeting. I hate to see them sad.

Have you any fostering tips?

Yes, here are my top tips:

1. The information that you get about the child or young person can sound much worse than the reality, therefore make your own mind up when you meet them.
2. When children arrive - be warm and friendly on arrival but do not overwhelm them and give them some space. 😊 SMILE 😊.
3. Have some basics in stock – toothbrushes, toiletries, pants and socks, T-shirts and pyjamas are also useful.
4. Acknowledge and praise the child/young person 'doing things right.' Do not just catch them 'doing the wrong things.'
5. Use a Digital Devices Agreement setting out phone and social media usage especially with teenagers. With teenagers, we've found it useful to use a DDA which set outs phone usage and helps keeps them safe.
6. Build your relationship with your Supervising Social Worker (SSW) – ours is brilliant and is super supportive.
7. Not every child will be the right fit for your family. The Fostering team will help you find the right fit.
8. Get a dressing gown!
9. The support groups ran by foster carers for foster carers are brilliant! Get involved if you can.
10. Be prepared to be an advocate or champion for your child/young person. They need you by their side.
11. Book onto training courses provided free by Leicestershire County Council of which there are many. The training is brilliant. Also use your Fostering Handbook.

We are out and about! Come and say hi!

As part of our mini roadshow, we will be at the following events which are free to attend:

1. The Snapdragon's Children's Festival in Hinckley town centre on Friday 4 August 11-3pm.
2. Leicester Pride 2023 at Abbey Park in Leicester on Saturday 2 September.



The Fostering Team and friends at Leicester Pride 2022

Our upcoming 'Find out about Fostering events':

Our next in person event is on the **12 October** at **County Hall**.

[Book Now](#)

We also have several online events.

- **Thursday 31 August 2023**
- **Wednesday 20 September 2023**
- **Wednesday 1 November 2023**
- **Thursday 23 November 2023**

- Tuesday 12 December 2023

Online Events

In case you missed it: Increased Payments and Allowances

We are delighted that the Qualifying Care Relief payment has been increased. The Qualifying Care Relief fixed amount per household, per year, has been increased for UK foster carers to £18,140 (previously £10,000) in the recent Spring 2023 Budget.



Thinking about fostering but worried about finances?



The fostering, fees, and allowances have also seen an increase from April 2023! You can check the benefits out by viewing our [Payments and Allowances PDF](#), for a more details insight into the payments and allowances you can also see the examples of payments for our different types of foster carers at the bottom of this [page](#), or view the [additional information PDF](#).

Don't forget, we're here to help....



Don't forget, the purpose of our recruitment team is to help you decide if and when fostering is right for you and your family. There are no silly questions. Our friendly team are here to help.

For more information about how fostering could work for you, call Leicestershire County Council's fostering recruitment team on 0116 305 0505, email them at fostering@leics.gov.uk or visit FosteringLeicestershire.com. We also have late night Tuesday from 5pm to 8pm where Janyce, our Fostering Recruitment Co-ordinator will be on hand to answer any calls or whatsapp messages.