



Become a Foster Carer

If you're exploring fostering, we'll meet you where you are and walk with you every step of the way.

Fostering is a decision that asks for thought, honesty, and courage. It can bring excitement, uncertainty, unexpected questions, and moments of real self-reflection. Whatever has brought you to this point, we'll help you understand what fostering involves in a way that feels steady, grounded, and personal.

At Soundly Fostering, you won't be passed between departments or handed a script.

You'll speak directly with people who stay involved, people who know you, remember you, and understand the emotional reality of fostering. Our directors, Joy and Kat, remain close to the work and involved in each carer's journey.

Whether you're ready to begin or simply curious, the first step is a conversation.

A Look At The Assessment Journey

Clear guidance, thoughtful pacing, and consistent support from start to finish.

Every fostering journey begins differently. Some people spend years thinking about it; others enquire after a single moment of realisation. We respond to where you are emotionally, practically, and personally.

Here's what the assessment journey looks like at Soundly Fostering...

Step 1

A Conversation

This first conversation is simply a space for you to talk about your interests, your circumstances, and what you've been thinking about.

We'll share what fostering entails, what support looks like with us, and answer any

questions you may not yet know you have. There's no pressure and no expectation, just an honest starting point.

Step 2

Home Visit

We'll visit you at home to understand your environment, routines, and household members.

This is also your chance to get to know us with how we work, what we're like in person, and how we show up when things are hard.

During this visit, we'll talk about your motivations, your lifestyle, your support network, what fostering might mean for everyone in your home, and how we might support you.

If the home visit feels right for both of us, we move on to the application.

Step 3

Preparation Training

You'll attend our preparation course, which is designed not to overwhelm you, but to honestly explore:

- the day-to-day realities of fostering
- the emotional impact on carers and households
- what helps children feel safe
- how fostering interacts with your own life experiences
- the legal and professional responsibilities
- how Soundly supports you through crises, change, and growth

This training helps you decide whether fostering is right for you at this point in your life, and helps us understand the support you'll need.

Step 4

Your Assessment

A skilled social worker will work closely with you across several meetings, either in person or virtually. This part of the journey is detailed, reflective, and conversational.

During this phase, you'll explore your personal history, your strengths, your experiences with challenges, your understanding of children's emotional needs, and your capacity to offer stability.

Assessments typically take around four months, but if you need it to go slower or faster, we will adapt to your pace.

Step 5

Checks & References

To keep children safe, we complete a range of statutory checks, including the following:

- Medical
- DBS
- Local Authority history
- School checks
- Employer references
- Ex-partner reference (if applicable)
- Home health and safety
- Pet considerations
- Armed forces (SSAFA) where relevant

We'll talk you through each step so nothing feels confusing or overwhelming.

Step 6

Panel & Approval

Your assessment is presented to our fostering panel, which is a group of experienced professionals who approach each application thoughtfully and respectfully.

You'll attend the panel meeting, and afterwards, our Agency Decision Maker will confirm the outcome in writing.

Most carers describe panel as much calmer and more supportive than they expected.

Requirements & Eligibility For Becoming a Foster Carer

Fostering doesn't ask for perfection. It asks for stability, openness, and the willingness to grow.

Some general and basic requirements for potential foster carers are:

- You have a spare bedroom
- You must be at least 25 years of age to become a foster carer with us
- You are generally fit and emotionally ready
- You can offer a stable and welcoming home
- You are open to learning about fostering and yourself
- You can work as part of a wider support network
- You can offer patience, consistency, and empathy

If you're unsure whether you meet the criteria, we encourage you to talk to us. Many people who assume they aren't eligible actually are.

What Type of Fostering Is For You?

Different children need different kinds of support. We'll help you understand what each type means in real life.

We offer a range of fostering opportunities, including:

Short-Term/Bridging

Supporting a child during periods of uncertainty or transition.

Long-Term

Providing stability and a consistent home life for a child over several years.

Emergency Care

Responding quickly when a child needs somewhere safe to stay, sometimes within hours.

Short Breaks

Offering planned, temporary support for another fostering household or family.

Enhanced Fostering

Caring for children with higher levels of emotional or practical need, where additional support and training are provided.

Parent & Child

Offering guidance and stability to a parent and their baby while they develop confidence and parenting skills.

We'll talk openly about what each type involves and help you decide what fits your strengths and circumstances.

The Support & Training Soundly Fostering Provides

Support from us isn't a checklist or a timetable; it's a relationship. Carers are never expected to manage the emotional weight of fostering on their own, and we don't wait for things to escalate before we step in. We stay present in the everyday rhythms of fostering, but we are just as present in the moments that feel overwhelming, confusing, or emotionally charged.

Our supervision is reflective and therapeutic, giving you time and space to make sense of what's happening for the child in your care and what's happening for you. These conversations are thoughtful, gentle, and grounded in the belief that fostering requires understanding, not judgment.

When challenges arise, whether they're connected to fostering or to your own life, we respond with honesty and care. Out-of-hours support means you can speak to someone who knows you, knows your circumstances, and understands how to help you steady the situation. We don't disappear when things become difficult; in fact, this is often when we show up the most.

Training at Soundly Fostering is practical, human, and shaped around real-life fostering situations. We focus on helping you understand children's emotional needs, strengthen your reflective thinking, and build the confidence to navigate the complexities of everyday care. Our training doesn't sit in isolation; it connects directly to the support you receive in supervision and in your ongoing conversations with the team.

Through regular visits, ongoing dialogue, and a consistent, familiar presence, we stay alongside you. We help you join the dots, make sense of patterns, and recognise your



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strengths. When crises or big decisions arise, you won't face them alone; you'll have people beside you who will help you think clearly, act safely, and feel supported.

Soundly Fostering's support is not just about responding; it's about staying steady with you, for the child's sake, and for yours.

