

## Fostering friendly policies - ideas for employers

Our carers have an important role as part of the professional team around the child. A supportive employer will enable foster carers to balance their work and caring responsibilities.

### How you can help

What is a foster friendly employer?

#### Special leave

Employers may consider extending an existing special leave policy to include foster carers. For example, employers may support staff by offering 5 days paid special leave in a twelve month period (pro rata for part time employees), in order to attend relevant training courses, meetings with professionals related to fostering, meetings with the child as part of the matching process and time off for settling in purposes.

#### Time off for training

Anyone interested in fostering must go through a robust assessment process and intensive training before they can be approved as foster carers. The majority of our pre-approval training is done over three consecutive Saturdays to lessen the impact on those people who work. However, ongoing training and personal development is an expected part of being a foster carer. Employers can support staff by giving them time off to complete training as appropriate.

#### Flexibility

Foster carers need to be able to respond to the needs of the children in their care. They are an important part of the team supporting the child and must be able to attend regular meetings about the children they care for. Access to flexible working, swapping shifts with colleagues or similar could really help foster carers to do this.

#### Emergency leave

The unexpected happens. Providing foster carers with the same access to emergency leave as parents, and recognising fostered children as dependants, like for any other parents, will enable foster carers to provide a stable and secure home for the children they care for.

## **Celebrating fostering**

**Your business could help celebrate and support foster care by:**



- **Making information about how to become a foster carer available on noticeboards, intranet sites or internal publications.**
- **Hosting an information session for your staff (we'll help!) about fostering and the support you offer.**
- **Providing space in your office or store during Foster Care Fortnight (held every May) to support the drive to raise awareness and recruit new foster carers.**
- **Helping us provide support services and social events for local foster families.**

**In some cases business demands might mean not all changes are possible. This is not one size fits all, our aim is that employers consider the needs of foster carers and do what they can to help. The reality is that a very small number of people apply to become foster carers each year, while the impact on your business would be minimal, the impact on our ability to recruit foster carers could be significant.**

## Benefits of joining the scheme

How will it  
benefit my  
business?

- Build on your brand - Send a message to potential customers that you are fully committed to looking after your staff and the local community.
- Show strong corporate social responsibility - Being seen to look after the wider community sends a clear message that you are a responsible company with a long term commitment to the area.
- Supporting staff builds morale.
- Promote your commitment to work life balance.
- You will have access to advice, information and support on helping staff who are or are becoming foster carers.
- Use the fostering friendly employer logo on recruitment material.

### Telford & Wrekin Council will:

- List you on our fostering website in a fostering friendly employer directory.
- Announce your membership on our fostering website.
- Announce your membership on social media.
- Announce your membership in our monthly foster carer newsletter
- Provide support on raising awareness of fostering internally at your company.

### Ready to join in?

Email: [fostering@telford.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@telford.gov.uk)

Visit: [telfordfostering.co.uk](http://telfordfostering.co.uk)