

Warwickshire County Council

Support Pledge for Foster Carers



Deciding to become a foster carer is a life changing. Opening your home to children and young people is an amazing commitment for anyone to do. It will mean things will be different for you and your family and it will have a significant impact on the lives of many children too.

To help create a positive experience for everyone involved Warwickshire County Council has committed to ensuring that foster carers receive consistent, high-quality support to help them care for children. We listen to foster carers and strong investment in this area has enabled us to make a Support Pledge for Foster Carers to demonstrate the help available and benefits of the role.

Warwickshire County Council pledge to our foster carers that we will:

- Complete all foster carer assessment within five months of application
- Fast track assessments and access to the skill level for foster carers transferring from other authorities
- Provide all newly approved foster carers with a Family Support Worker to support with their induction along with ongoing 1-2-1 support, access to an Advice and Mediation Officer and a 24/7 foster carer support line
- Complete an annual Foster Home Review
- Provide opportunity for foster carers to voice their views by speaking to the Fostering Review Officer and support to attend the Fostering Panel
- Support mainstream carers to move swiftly and easily between different fostering schemes
- Provide access to a range of peer support groups for foster carers and their families
- Provide respite support through the peer to peer support group Fostering Family, allowing carers to receive respite and children to spend time with other carers they see as part of the fostering family
- Provide free access to health and wellbeing services which include access to free counselling, advice and information
- Provide foster carers with a favourable allowance scheme and the option of 52 week paid foster care schemes
- Provide online and direct training at no costs, including accredited NVQ qualifications through our Qualification and Credit Framework
- Provide Warwickshire County Council employees who are approved foster carers with additional annual leave entitlement.

Warwickshire Fostering Service

Recruitment and assessment

A dedicated team will take all enquiries and offer a home visit.

We have recently reviewed and reduced the amount of questions we ask on the first call and offer a home visit instead.

We aim to complete assessments in five months.

We have a varied training programme and are a QCF centre of excellence.

Support and supervision

Social workers monitor and support foster carers through supervisions and completing foster carer reviews.

Family support workers are assigned to support carers during their first year of approval and to complete specific pieces of time-based intervention work.

Warwickshire Fostering Panel

We have a Fostering Panel with independent Chair and Vice Chair. Warwickshire Fostering Panel members are interviewed, complete an induction and all receive training.

The Fostering Panel has a dedicated advisor and business support. All foster carer assessments are submitted to panel for approval, including connected persons.

In line with regulations, all first foster home reviews are heard by the Fostering Panel.

Ongoing foster home reviews (where there are no significant issues or changes) are submitted to the Fostering Review Officer and then sent to the Agency Decision Maker.

Specialist foster care schemes

There are several paid schemes:

Solo is for children who are on the edge of residential or stepping down from residential care, including children with disabilities.

Short Term Emergency Placements are for those children who need a time limited placement to allow for planning (10 to 20 days). We are changing the offer to a 28-day placement with one-week paid leave at a reduced rate.

Specialist Parent and Child is a 12-week placement to allow for an assessment of parent(s) and child in a family setting. The parent and child foster carer is expected to accept three placements a year.

Family Link carers offer families in the community regular respite to children with a variety of disabilities. This gives their own family a break and the child a chance to make consistent relationships with their regular respite foster carer(s) and their families.

Placement Hub

All placement referrals come into the placement hub to be matched with internal foster carers.

The hub consists of hub managers, fostering staff on a rota basis and referral and placement officers commissioning. A Referral and Placement Officer completes all independent fostering agency, residential and supported accommodation searches.

The management of emergency duty carers also sits within this team.

Warwickshire Fostering Service also includes the Connected Person and Special Guardianship Order team.

