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 ISLINGTON

Becoming an Islington Specialist Foster Carer



What is specialist foster care?

Islington's specialist fostering scheme is a challenging but hugely rewarding role caring for young people 11-16 years exhibiting challenging behaviour. These young people will have had very difficult experiences and may have a history of previously failed foster placements.

Some will be out of school, have little routine in their lives and may feel rejected, unhappy or rebellious.

This means the young people will need stability and support. Through building communication you will develop a positive relationship to bring about long term change. You would be actively involved in supporting young people to go to school and promoting learning both at home and school while providing positive leisure activities.

Carers need to be open-minded and have the commitment to make a difference to a young person's life.





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Who needs specialist foster care?

The young people come from a variety of backgrounds and situations. Many of these young people will have experienced a traumatic childhood and may have a history of a number of broken foster placements.

- Many of these young people will be out of school
- They may have been in trouble with the police

This is John's Story

Aged 11, John was part of a street gang increasingly involved in criminal activity. He had a history of non school attendance and was placed with Peter, a male specialist foster carer.

Peter was made aware from the beginning that this situation was challenging and that John would find house rules and boundaries difficult. Peter worked with the fostering team to address all of John's individual needs. From this work it emerged that John had dyslexia, a factor in him not wanting to engage with school.

John is now attending an alternative education provision and is receiving intensive support. He still finds boundaries a struggle but has not been involved with the police, a huge step for John, and continues to develop a trusting relationship with Peter.

What will I receive?

As an Islington specialist foster carer you will receive:

- Allowances of £750 per week
- Retainers of £450 per week (up to 4 weeks)
- 24 hours specialist support
- On-going training to meet children's needs
- A dedicated social worker offering support and supervision
- Clinical group supervision
- Personalised support package to meet the needs of the young person
- Clinical one-to-one monthly supervision



Could I be a specialist foster carer?

You need previous experience of being around young people who have complex needs and be understanding of the problems they face today.

You will patiently build a warm, trusting relationship with a young person to help them find their own special talents and to help them improve their life and to believe in themselves. You'll be an active part of a professional team and receive regular support and training.

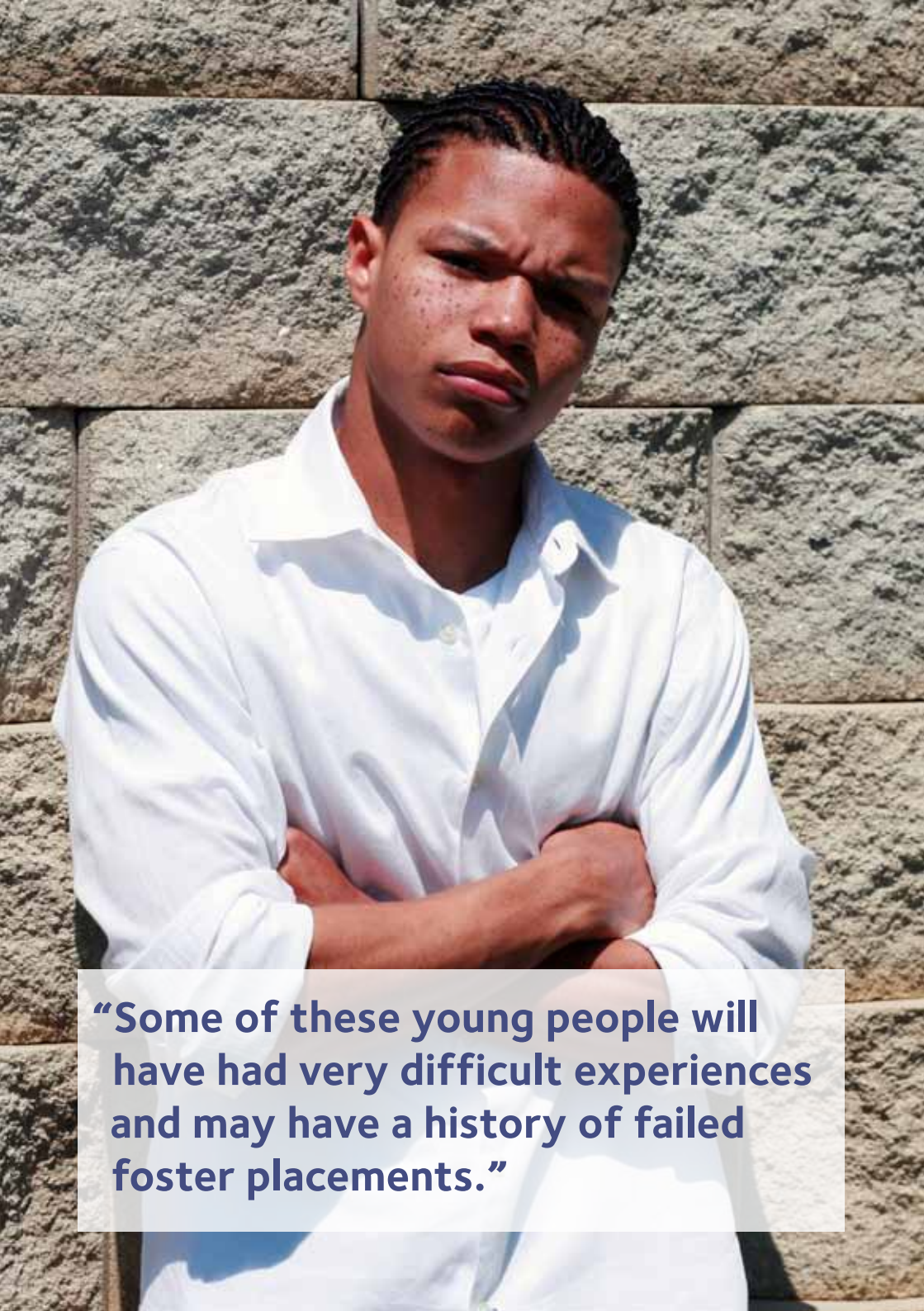
You don't need to live in Islington but must have a spare room and no other young children in the house.

To become a specialist foster carer you should:

- Have a spare room
- Have no younger children in the house
- Live within 20 miles of Islington
- One carer should be available full time
- If carers are a couple the other carer can be employed full time



“Specialist foster carers must be understanding of challenging behaviour and the problems young people face today.”



“Some of these young people will have had very difficult experiences and may have a history of failed foster placements.”

Could this be you?

- Has experience of working with young people
- Understanding of challenging behaviour and problems young people face today
- Able to listen to young people's wishes & feelings
- Can understand and respond to young people's emotional needs
- Communicates effectively and non-judgementally often in highly emotional situations
- Able to set and maintain clear boundaries
- Able to keep detailed records
- Work as effective advocate for the young person
- Able to effectively work with other agencies: schools, police, probation, courts and social care and safe guarding
- Able to engage with other professionals in reviews and conferences
- Has the ability to build up a positive relationship with the young person, to encourage and support their interest and to build up their self esteem
- Able to work with any difficult issues exhibited by young people
- Available to travel with the young person to school and appointments when needed





How to become a specialist foster carer with Islington

Contact us on 0800 073 0428 for a one-to-one discussion with a designated specialist fostering social worker.

Successful applicants will be visited at home and then invited to the 4-day Skills to Foster training course that helps you explore your interest in specialist fostering.

Full references on all applicants will be taken up at a later stage. The checks and references in the process for becoming a foster carer are very important so it may take 4-6 months from your formal application date.

If you have any questions about the process contact us on 020 527 7933 or email fostering@islington.gov.uk.

Your fostering journey

Initial contact with Islington fostering service. Information pack is sent.

A member of our team comes to your home for an initial visit.

Applicants not meeting criteria will be informed in writing.

You will attend the four day Skills to Foster course in our training rooms.

You decide to formally apply to be assessed by completing an application for Stage 1 Assessment of Suitability.

Stage 1 Assessment of Suitability - A dedicated worker supports your learning and completes checks and references. Once all the information has been received a decision will be made within 10 working days whether to proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 Full Assessment - A dedicated social worker begins full fostering assessment (three to four months). This includes an assessment review to see how the assessment is progressing.

You and your assessor work together to produce an assessment report. You will then have 10 working days to read, discuss and comment.

You attend a fostering panel with your social worker where your assessment report is presented with a recommendation of approval.

Each applicant is assessed on their individual situation and circumstances and Islington Fostering Service has the authority to discontinue the assessment at any time during the process. In these instances applicants will be given clear reasons by the service.