



shine

fostering

Who we are, what we do and how to become a foster carer

Guide

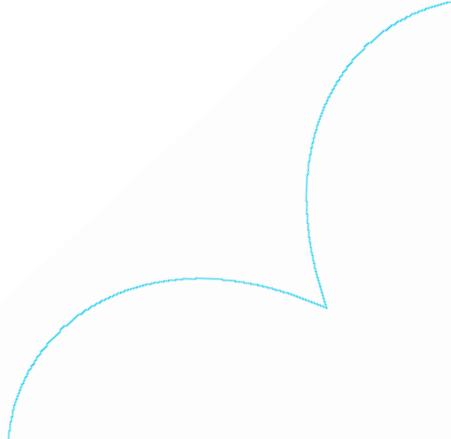
Our story

Shine Fostering is an independent fostering agency. We are registered with Ofsted, which is a legal requirement.

We recruit and train foster carers to look after children in the care system. We have always believed that children in care deserve the very best and to feel good about their experience of foster carer. That is why we set up Shine.

We can't undo the past, but we can create better lives for our children, here and now, and when they move on, they will feel like the future is a fantastic gift. For this to happen, we need carers who share our vision.

We are based at South Woodford and are small, by design. This works well for the kind of services we offer and the way we want to work. Everyone at Shine is approachable, flexible and always here for our carers and our foster children.



Our work

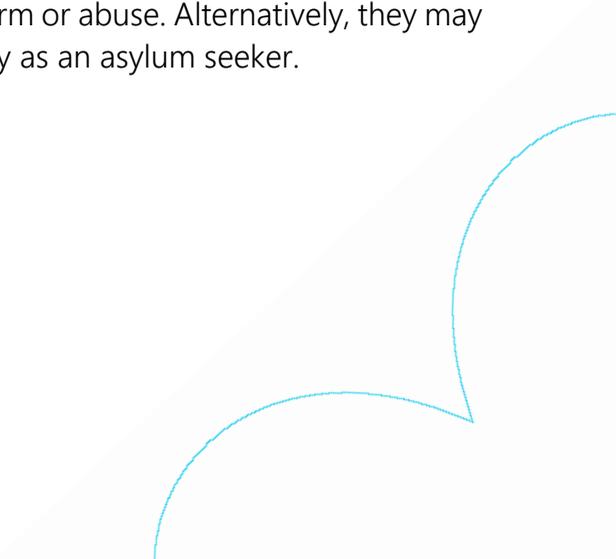
We recruit, approve, train and support foster carers.

We also work with our foster children, supporting them in their education, health and well-being.

Every year Shine runs a programme of fun, educational, recreational and creative activities and opportunities.

Children and young people need foster carers when they have been placed in the care of their Local Authority and, following assessment, it has been decided that the way forward for the child is to live in a foster family.

Overwhelmingly, it is what has happened to the child, and not what they have done which brings a young person into care. They may have been neglected, be at risk, or have experienced significant harm or abuse. Alternatively, they may have arrived in the country as an asylum seeker.



Become a foster carer

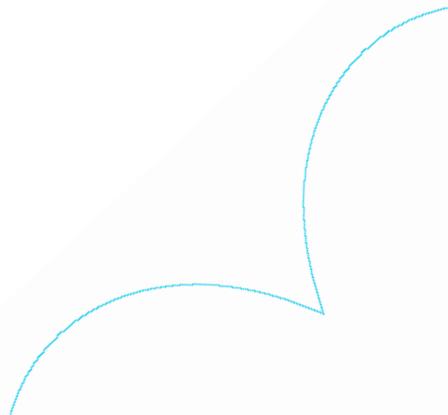
There is a desperate shortage of foster carers and families to provide a home for children and young people.

Fostering changes lives - for foster carers and foster children.

What you need to know

If you contact us about becoming a foster carer, this is what you can expect. It applies to your partner too, if your partner lives with you, as an application must be for both of you. From the time you make an application to being approved should take about eight months.

There will be a number of checks, all of which we will explain and seek your consent to undertake.



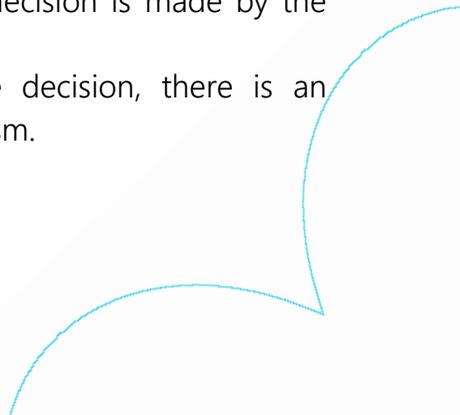
MAKE AN APPLICATION

- You get in touch followed by a short phone interview
- We send and you complete an application form
- We visit you in your home
- We decide about your application

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- You are assessed by an independent social worker
- There are several visits to your home, each lasting about three hours
- The social worker will explore all areas of your life and experience.
- The assessment is probing and extremely thorough.

APPROVAL AS A FOSTER CARER

- Your assessment report goes to our Fostering Panel and you will be invited to attend
 - The Fostering Panel will make recommendations about your approval and the final decision is made by the agency's Decision Maker
 - If you don't agree with the decision, there is an Independent Review Mechanism.
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Working with our carers

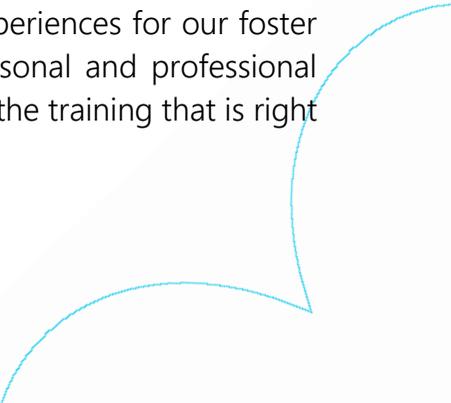
Carers receive training, supervision, support and for each child cared for there is a finance package. The finance package is made up of allowances to be spent by the carer on the care of the child, and money paid to the carer for their household wear and tear and a carer fee. The total amount per week ranges from £405 to £550 for each child and is determined by the Local Authority and the specific needs of the child.

Carers also have paid holiday entitlement and other breaks which are designed to support the child and the carer.

Carers are classified as self-employed and are responsible for their own tax and national insurance.

TRAINING

We want our carers to enjoy their training, and to feel inspired by it. It is also a chance to step out of the daily routine and reflect on the fostering role. Training is our investment in foster carers, and with that, better experiences for our foster children. It drives the continuing personal and professional development of every carer. We find the training that is right for carers.



SUPPORT

Support is available round the clock. During office hours carers can speak to any member of staff, including the Director. We are here for you and want to hear from you. We have an out of hours service.

THE SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER

Each carer is allocated a Supervising Social Worker who phones regularly, at least once a week and usually much more often. They connect the carer and the carer's household to the agency. They give practical and professional support, they get to know everyone in the household.

Supervising Social Workers have supervising duties as well support. When there are foster children in the home, the Supervising Social Worker visits every four weeks to see how everyone is. Looked after children have care plans and checking that carers are working to the plan is another important reason for visiting.

Every year the Supervising Social Worker is responsible for the annual review of the foster carer and writes the report.



FOSTERING MENTOR

Our Fostering Mentor phones carers at agreed times to talk over anything the carers have on their minds. She supports carers to achieve their personal development targets and works as one of the Skills to Foster trainers.

EDUCATION CO-ORDINATOR

Shine Fostering has a full-time Education Co-ordinator who is a qualified teacher. She is there to help carers with anything to do with foster children's education and carer learning and organises the training for everyone at the Agency.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING CO-ORDINATOR

Our Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator is a qualified nurse and mental health specialist. She supports foster carers to improve the health and wellbeing of their foster children.

We are proactive about mental health and wellbeing, for everyone. Carers just need a break and we support them in this. We organise respite care. If carers ask about counselling or if we feel this would be the right kind of support for them, we enable carers to access confidential counselling.



PEER GROUP SUPPORT

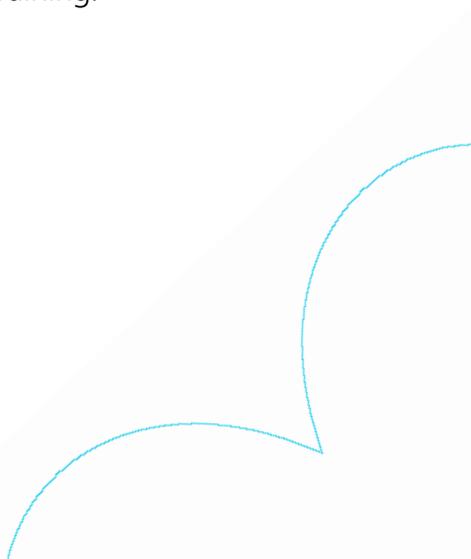
The foster carer groups bring carers together to talk about fostering and any issues they have.

It is about solidarity and is down-time from the daily demands of being a foster carer.

NOMINATED CARERS

When we recruit new carers, we also get to know the people who will be their support network. This informal support is essential to any carer, is required by the agency and complements the agency's formal support.

Nominated carers are often family members or friends in the carer's local community who can offer practical backup to the carer, for example, child care, as well as providing emotional support for the carer. We do DBS checks for nominated carers and they are invited to all the carer training.



Contact us

If you think you could be a foster carer or want to know more about fostering, please get in touch.

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