



**Improving Foster
Care capacity for
Local Authorities**



The

problem

More children and young people are requiring care in loving caring homes provided by Foster Carers

The traditional model for recruiting and supporting people and families to Foster children is no longer as effective as in the past

Our amazing Fostering community is ageing and looking to retire

Children's Social Care Fostering Teams are in competition to recruit new Foster Carers with the Independent Sector and a strong employment market post pandemic.

While Foster Care allowances have increased, the rate of applications for people to become Carers is not in step with current demand for placements.

Supporting models like Mockingbird are emerging as a great way to promote peer support and networks for Carers but are only short-term funded and require long term commitment and investment.

Current National, Regional and Local recruitment and Marketing campaigns have produced limited impact on the numbers of Foster Carers locally.

There remains a stigma in some communities that they would not be considered as Foster Carers, the assessment process can be off putting and lengthy.

The risks

A lack of new ideas, carers' insight and innovative Foster Care support could result in fewer loving Foster homes for the predicted rise in children requiring care.

Children need loving homes to thrive. The lack of available Foster Care placements is a current and real threat.

A lack of local capacity in Children's Services Teams to recruit, engage and retain new Foster Carers locally.

An increase in Foster Care placement breakdown due to pressure on family life due to a lack of structured, tailored support, engagement activity and respite.

An increase in pressure on Foster Carers to take in more children that they are comfortable with.

A risk that the Fostering experience becomes a negative one meaning peer recruitment and training is not as effective.

More children experience placement moves or require a residential home placement – driving up costs and reducing their positive outcomes.



Proposal/solution menu

Effective diagnostic analysis of your local Foster Care recruitment, retention and support offer to produce a medium term invest to save proposal to increase Foster Care capacity, stability and support

Expert, detailed project management capacity can be brought together to research and understand your local Foster Care opportunities to increase capacity and interest.

Independent system expertise to add value to tried and tested recruitment and retention research, but also apply an options appraisal to increase medium term growth models of support to increase capacity, improve outcomes and maximise investment into local people.

Co-produce options for support, respite and breakdown investment

Trusted implementation by sector-led experts to produce detailed implementation plans that push the boundaries to improve the Foster Care offer locally within agreed budget.

An end-to-end business process review and improvement proposals for current Fostering application, assessment and registration to streamline the process and maximise effectiveness exploring digital and human options for success.

Tailored support to align with DFE innovation funding as a trusted partner.



Financial benefits

and case for invest to save

Significant savings achievable in building Foster Care capacity but more importantly more loving homes created for children who are exposed to trauma.

The difference in weekly cost of an in house foster placement compared to an expensive external/private placement is in the £1000's



Reduction in local competition for available registered Foster Care placements.

An improved source of intelligence and market planning, based on trends in needs at scale, enabling improved planning of provision looking beyond immediate needs – creating an MTFP for Foster Care.

Invest to save in Foster Carer respite support, structured activity, greater resilience and specialist carers to meet current and future demand will help achieve service pressures and future demand for external residential placement costs.

