Flourish Fostering

Guide to Therapeutic Fostering



www.flourishfostering.co.uk

Welcome

Thank you for considering becoming a foster parent with Flourish Fostering. My partners and I started this small (but mighty!) company in 2019 after our experiences in fostering services and our knowledge of therapeutic parenting showed us that there was more that could be done for vulnerable young people.

At Flourish, our mission is to provide Foster Parents with the support and knowledge they need to have a real impact on the lives of young people who have experienced trauma.

In this guide, we'll go over the basics of fostering and what makes the therapeutic approach so effective at helping vulnerable young people recover from past trauma and flourish.

You'll also be introduced to one of our Flourish families and learn about the stages of becoming a foster parent with us.

I'm thrilled that you're considering us for your fostering journey.

MICA DOUGLAS

Co-Founder and Clinical Director at Flourish Fostering



What is fostering?

Simply put, fostering is when a child or young person cannot live with their birth parents and instead lives with foster parents.



Foster parents provide safe, supportive and nurturing homes so that the child can grow, learn and flourish.

A child might need to be in foster care for a number of different reasons, but it's important to remember that it's never the child's fault that they need foster care. They have often experienced significant trauma and have been let down by people they trusted to take care of them.

WHAT DO FOSTER PARENTS DO?

Foster parents become the primary care giver for the young people they care for. Therefore, their role involves everything needed to make that child feel valued, supported and safe in a secure and predictable environment.

This will include making sure that the young person has transport to and from school, cooking them healthy meals, providing a clean and safe home, supporting them with emotional issues, helping them with homework and school projects, organising visits with their birth family, if appropriate, and much more.

Fostering is a diverse and rewarding role that's suited to caring people who want to positively impact the lives of vulnerable children.

How is Therapeutic Fostering different?

At Flourish, our therapeutic approach is at the heart of everything we do. This isn't just about making sure you will always have access to support and our therapy team, it's also about making you an expert in therapeutic thinking so you can consistently deliver the type of nurture and support that is so vital to helping young people recover from trauma.



The core principle of therapeutic fostering is: if children are provided with the right environment and support, they can heal from past traumas and begin to thrive.

Day to day, this difference is reflected in the understanding and empathy that our foster parents have for the young people they care for. Where some may have seen door slamming and shouting, our foster parents are trained and supported to look past the behaviour and to empathise with the young person's experiences that might be causing them to express their feelings through their behaviour.

Looking past the behaviour isn't always easy. That's why we offer robust support packages and training to make sure our Foster Parents feel confident and able to deliver therapeutic parenting to the children they care for.

What exactly is trauma?

Trauma is the emotional response to bad experiences. Trauma is not the experience itself, but the individual response to it. That's why what may be traumatic to some, isn't to others.

Almost all young people in care would have experienced some form of relational trauma. This is trauma relating to your close relationships and can only be addressed and healed by relational repair which means forming safe, predictable relationships with care givers.



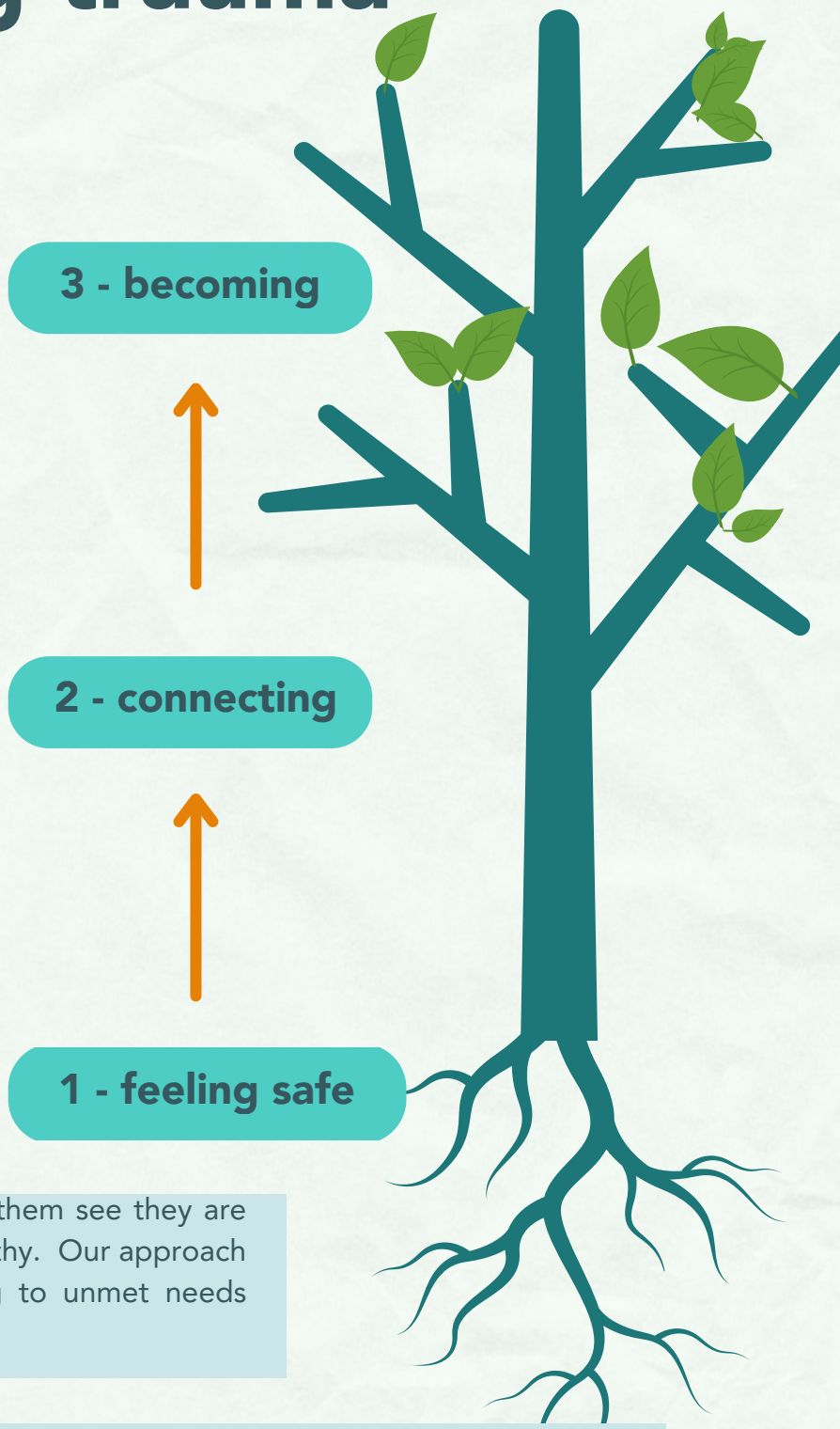




Our therapeutic model for treating trauma

1 - feeling safe

The first step in our model is creating a foundation of safety. We prioritise helping children feel safe and secure. This involves understanding each child's unique needs and adapting their environment to foster security. For us, safety is not just a physical concept; it's about ensuring children feel safe on a conscious level and in their bodies. We support foster parents in providing a safe and supportive environment for their children.



2 - connecting

The second phase focuses on building human connections. The therapeutic relationship between foster parents and children is essential for healing. We believe in the power of relational repair, offering nurturing, predictable, and caring relationships.

By prioritising a child's needs, we help them see they are worthy of love, fostering trust and empathy. Our approach involves understanding and responding to unmet needs rather than focusing on behaviours.

3 - becoming

The third phase is about growth and identity. As a child's brain calms through a supportive relationship, they start on the path to resilience and recovery. Feeling seen and heard allows them to express and make meaning of their experiences. This phase empowers children to understand and change their behaviours, promoting healing and acceptance within the safety of their relationship with Foster Parents.

How is Flourish Fostering different?

From industry leading training to friendly offices where people know you by name. At Flourish, everything we do has our foster families at the heart of it.

SUPPORT

- 21 days paid respite
- Access to in-house psychotherapists
- Holiday allowance
- Clothing allowance
- School uniform allowance
- Summer holiday allowance
- Training progression pathways
- Externally recognised Qualifications
- Dedicated supervising social worker

TRAINING



Flourish foster parents can access all our training free of charge. As leaders of therapeutic practice, our training courses are constantly being updated and revised to ensure that they're relevant and practical for foster parents.

With Flourish, you also have the unique opportunity of gaining degree-level qualifications in therapeutic practice. This is an optional progression path that can be achieved at your own pace.

How we work with local authorities



Local authorities will approach us if they think we could help find a young person in their care a supportive foster home. Our job is to match that young person to one of our available foster parents.

We take the matching process of children and foster parents very seriously. We ensure the child coming into the home will be suitable for the foster parent's homelife and skillset.



Because our foster parents benefit from industry-leading, trauma-informed training, as well as a comprehensive support package, they are often best placed to support young people with complex needs who require additional support. This extra level of support is reflected in our enhanced financial rewards and comprehensive support.

Who are we looking for?

There's no one size fits all approach to becoming a great foster parent. We have a community of foster parents from different backgrounds and beliefs which gives them completely different life experiences. This diverse range of life experiences gives each foster parent a unique perspective and ability to help young people thrive.

We take in to account your unique life experiences and background when matching you with a young person. This helps us keep family stability and foster parent satisfaction so high.

Ultimately, what we're looking for is people who share our passion about creating better outcomes for young people who have experienced trauma. Everything else can be achieved through training and development.

If this sounds like you, we'd love to hear from you.





How do you become a foster parent?

We need to do comprehensive checks and training before we can approve someone to become a foster parent. The process typically takes between 3-6 months; while this may seem daunting, it's important to remember that you'll be supported by our registered manager every step of the way.

HOME VISIT

The first step after sending us an enquiry is for one of our registered managers to come out and meet you in your home. They'll discuss fostering further with you and be on hand to answer any of your questions.

APPLICATION

If the registered manager believes that you would be a good fit for Flourish, they will give you an application form for you to fill out.

TRAINING AND CHECKS

While various documents are checked and references are contacted, you'll be invited to attend some training. The first training you will attend is called **Introduction to Fostering** and is compulsory for all prospective foster parents. After that, you will begin to be invited to our therapeutic training sessions so you can start to learn the Flourish way. The training offers a great opportunity to meet other foster parents and those also going through the assessment process.

FORM F

Together with your social work assessor you will complete a form F assessment. This is a collaborative document that tells your story and why you would be a good foster parent.

PANEL AND APPROVAL

Your form F is presented to a panel who make a recommendation on whether you should be an approved foster parent.

Different types of foster care





Children may find themselves in need of a foster family for a variety of reasons. That's why we offer different types of foster care placements so that we can always support young people when they need us.

From emergency care, that can last as little as a few nights, to long term care designed to last until the young person reaches independence, there are fostering opportunities for all.

We also provide more specialist fostering opportunities, one of which is Parent and Child. In these situations, a Foster Parent will provide a supportive and nurturing home for both the parent and their young child. This allows the parent to stay with their child while being monitored and supported by a well-trained foster parent.

Many of our foster parents will choose to try a different types of foster care while with us. This helps give them richer experiences and find the type of care they enjoy.

Financial benefits

We train our foster parents to be experts in therapeutic practice. Because of this added level of training, we provide them with generous weekly payments.

Our foster parents also benefit from progression opportunities, with their weekly payments increasing based on their time with us and the training they've attended.
Payments to foster parents are made up of two different payments. One is called the professional fee; this is the payment for the foster parent for providing the care.

The other payment is called the maintenance allowance; this payment is to support the additional cost of having a young person in their home and will contribute towards bills and food.

In addition to the weekly fee and allowance, we provide additional payments to our foster parents throughout the year to ensure that they can always provide the best possible homes for the young people they care for.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- School uniform allowance
- Summer activity allowance
- Festival allowance
- 21 days paid respite per year
- Holiday allowance
- Clothing allowance
- Birthday allowance
- Baby and toddler equipment allowance

Case study

After seeing a poster advertising fostering in her local council office, Lynnette knew exactly what she wanted her next role to be.

30 years and 14 foster children later, Lynette and her husband, Tony, are still loving every minute of being Foster Parents.



WHAT IS THERAPEUTIC FOSTERING?

"Therapeutic fostering is about helping the child to help themselves. It's about recognising their trauma and understanding it to help them with healing themselves because sadly we can't heal for them. It's about enabling them with the tools they need to get through life."

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE FOSTERING MEMORY?

"When I attended one of my very first foster children's weddings. It was such an honour to be invited and he stood up in front and declared 'that woman saved my life' to everyone that was there. Now he has seven children of his own and he's really settled in life. It's been beautiful to witness."

WHY FLOURISH?

"Working with Flourish has been wonderful. The training is excellent, some of the best I've ever done, and they have the right ethos. I can take part in training as often as I want. You can also pick what you want to study on top of your mandatory modules. I personally always pick modules based on trauma, as I strive to be trauma informed.

The support has been fantastic. My supervising social worker is great, he encourages me to really think and get under the skin of things. He's also available whenever I need him, I just need to phone him and he's happy to help."

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR PROSPECTIVE FOSTER PARENTS?

"It's important to be open and to listen to the more experienced foster parents because they can give you a wealth of advice. Find people to vibe with and get ideas from and form relationships with other foster parents for support."

For more of our case studies, visit: Foster Parent Case Studies Flourish Fostering

FAQs

CAN I FOSTER IF I HAVE PETS?

Pets make a welcome addition to any family. To ensure the safety of your foster child, all pets need to go through a Pet Assessment, your social worker will guide you through this during your application process.

DO I NEED A SPARE ROOM?

Yes, you will need a spare room for each foster child you place.

DO I NEED TO OWN MY HOME TO FOSTER?

No, you don't need to own your home to become a foster parent. If you rent, you will need to have your landlord's permission.

CAN I FOSTER IF I AM SINGLE?

Yes, you can foster if you are single, married, widowed, or engaged.

WHAT EXPERIENCE DO I NEED TO BECOME A FOSTER PARENT?

There's no direct experience needed to become an amazing foster parent. Often, your life experiences up to this point will have equip you with compassion and sensibility that we're looking for.

HOW LONG DOES THE APPLICATION PROCESS TAKE?

It can typically take between 3-6 months from completing the application form to being approved.

Next steps...

We'd love to have you as part of the Flourish Family.

If you're ready to start an application to foster, the first process is to send us an enquiry. A member of our team will contact you to start you on this rewarding journey.

ENQUIRIES CAN BE SUBMITTED VIA:

- Our website at www.flourishfostering.co.uk
- By email at hello@flourishfostering.co.uk

MAYBE IN THE FUTURE?

Deciding to foster takes a lot of time and consideration. If you love the idea of fostering but you're not quite ready to commit, there are some ways you can stay in touch with us.

Join our mailing list: Visit www.flourishfostering.co.uk to join our mailing list and receive news, case studies and lots more.

Follow us on social media: Stay up to date with us on Facebook and Instagram.

Have an informal chat: Even if you're not ready to start your fostering journey, our friendly team would be happy to answer any questions or assist you in your fostering journey any way they can. You won't be committing to anything by getting in touch with us.





Foster parents change lives. Could you?



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