Fostering Service

Glasgow CITY COUNCIL

LEGACY 2014
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES
GLASGOW

families for children
glasgow cares for their future... could you?

Vision

To improve outcomes for vulnerable children in Glasgow by delivering and maintaining a high quality and effective fostering and adoption service

Copyright © 2014 Glasgow City Council - Social Work Services. Designed by Graphics and Communications, Education Services.

Fostering Service

Contents

Introduction	1
Glasgow Needs Foster Carers	2
Criteria for applicants	3
Types of Fostering	5
Questions and Answers	12
The Process	15

Contact Us

Families for Children
Martyrs' School,
17 Parson Street,
Townhead,
Glasgow, G4 0RX

Phone 0345 276 5555

families.children@sw.glasgow.gov.uk

www.fosterglasgow.org

Glasgow CITY COUNCIL

LEGACY 2014
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES
GLASGOW

families for children
glasgow cares for their future... could you?

Introduction

Glasgow City Council welcomes your enquiry about becoming a foster carer. Fostering is a life changing process, therefore we would encourage you to carefully consider all the information we have included in this pack.

There are several ways to foster and these will be outlined within this booklet and this should help you decide what type of fostering is best suited to you and your family.

Glasgow's experienced staff team will be happy to offer any information, help and support to enable you to take the next step.

Glasgow needs foster carers

Glasgow City Council is the biggest local authority in Scotland and is the largest provider of foster care in the whole of Scotland.

National indicators show that Glasgow City has the highest deprivation rate in the whole of Scotland, as well as the highest prevalence of alcohol and drug misuse.

Currently in Glasgow there are nearly **1400 children accommodated** away from home. The main reasons for this are:

Lack of parental care – 37%

Parental alcohol or drug misuse – 20%

Child protection issues – 25%

We require foster families for children of all ages, from a range of backgrounds and with varying needs.

More than 40% of the children currently in care are in the 5-11 year age group and many children are in sibling groups of two or more. A priority for Families for Children is to keep siblings together where possible and we particularly welcome applications from people who are interested in fostering sibling groups.

Copyright © 2014 Glasgow City Council - Social Work Services. Designed by Graphics and Communications, Education Services.

Criteria for applicants

- Applicants must be over 21 years old
- Applicants must have a spare room
- Single applicants as well as couples are welcomed
- Couples do not need to be married or in a civil partnership but they must have lived together for a minimum of 2 years
- Applicants do not have to be employed
- Applicants do not need to own their own home
- All applicants will be subject to Local Authority, health, employment and PVG checks

We require above all carers who are committed to caring for Glasgow's most vulnerable children. A good carer will offer a secure and stable home to a child as well as a safe and nurturing environment. It is a requirement that our carers work as part of a team in partnership with other agencies and parents to obtain the best possible outcomes for children.

Testimonial

Fostering is something that I'd always thought about, (other family members had done it). We decided it would be best to wait until our youngest child had started school. In January 2012 I made the phone call to Families for Children. We knew we wanted to foster with Glasgow City Council as we felt they would give us the best support.

I had a long chat on the phone with a social worker and she agreed to send us an information pack. The next step was an information evening followed by preparation groups. All this took us six months. We learnt a lot about ourselves during this stage as the social workers took us through various scenarios and got us to look at issues from various sides.

We then moved on to the assessment itself. We were assigned a social worker who spent the next seven months getting to know us and working through what fostering meant to us. This part of the process can be hard work. The whole family were involved but it's crucial to do it. At the time we wanted to 'get on with things' and to get through it all quickly. However, it's only once we were through the other side that we realised how important it was that we'd taken our time.

In May 2013 we went to panel and were approved. Very shortly after that we had a three day old baby living with us!

We've all settled into fostering really well. Things I worried about such as how my children would cope have turned out not to be an issue at all. We have a very supportive social worker assigned to us who visits and makes sure all is well and that we're coping ok.

Fostering is hard work; there are meetings, contact visits and writing a diary for the child. However, at the end of the day when all is quiet I know we've done something worthwhile.

a foster parent in Glasgow

Copyright © 2014 Glasgow City Council - Social Work Services. Designed by Graphics and Communications, Education Services.

Types of Fostering

There is a range of ways to offer support to accommodated children through fostering and our experienced team will be more than happy to work with you to explore the best option for you and your family.

- The options available are:
- Short term (Temporary)
- Permanent Foster Care
- Respite

Applicants may also wish to apply to support children and families within the community. This can be done through:

- Supported care
- Family-Based Respite
- Shared Care

Below is a brief outline of each of the different fostering options.

Short term (Temporary) Fostering

Short term carers look after children of all ages who can no longer remain in the care of their families for a variety of reasons. When children are placed in short term care it may be because there has been a crisis at home or they may have been accommodated due to ongoing family issues which are difficult to resolve.

After the point of accommodation it will be a priority for his/her social work department to work with the child and family to attempt to rehabilitate the child back to its family. This may take several weeks, months or potentially years. In other cases rehabilitation may not be possible and alternative life long care for children will need to be explored.

During the period of accommodation the foster carer will be required to provide the child with a secure, stable and nurturing home environment

in which their physical and emotional needs will be met. This means that carers must work in partnership with health, education, social services and other agencies to ensure the best possible outcomes for children. The foster carer will also be required to support the child to attend contact with their birth families and/or siblings so that an assessment of parental ability can be undertaken.

Short term foster carers work as part of a care team and as such will be required to attend a variety of meetings and appointments. Families for Children ask that at least one carer gives up work so that they can meet the demands which come with short term fostering. It is essential that carers are flexible and can make themselves available to attend these meetings and are able to act as an advocate for a child's needs and wishes where the child is unable to do so.

Short term carers do a vital job in caring for Glasgow's most vulnerable children through periods of difficulty and upset in their lives. They offer children a home until they can be rehabilitated back to their families or alternative life long carers. Carers in this category will tell you that the hardest part of this job is having to say goodbye to children. However you will also have the satisfaction of helping a child through a difficult period and either being reunited safely to their families or other life long care.

Permanent Fostering

Permanent carers look after children from all ages and backgrounds who have been accommodated and a decision has already been made that they will not be returning to the care of their families.

Carers in this category are committing to look after children throughout their lives until the point where they can move on to independence. The children and carers will continue to receive support from social services, and the carers have a lot more input regarding decisions about the child's care plan.

Similar to short term care, permanent foster carers will be expected to work in partnership with health, education and other agencies to ensure the best outcome for children. This may include supporting children to remain in contact with birth families and/or siblings if this is deemed appropriate.

There will be a careful matching process between children and carers in this category as it is anticipated that this will be the child's permanent family. Permanent carers provide a stable home for Glasgow's most vulnerable children, enabling them to flourish as they grow towards independence.

Copyright © 2014 Glasgow City Council - Social Work Services. Designed by Graphics and Communications, Education Services.

Respite

Respite carers offer children and foster families a break during times of crisis or during holiday periods. In some instances it is not possible for foster families to take children on holiday; for example if they don't have parental permission or obtaining a passport is an issue. In these circumstances a respite carer looks after the foster children for a short period.

In some cases where a child needs a high level of support a respite carer is matched to a fostering family to provide a period of respite per month so that both the child and the foster carer receive a break. Respite carers in this instance provide consistency of care for children and they can become part of a child's care plan and an important part of a child's life.

Copyright © 2014 Glasgow City Council - Social Work Services. Designed by Graphics and Communications, Education Services.

Other types of Fostering

We also welcome enquiries from people who wish to support children and families in the community. These carers are an important resource for Families for Children as they may make a difference between a child being taken into care and helping keep families together.

This can be done through the following ways:

Supported Caring

Supported carers offer support and accommodation to young people over the age of 16 who have previously been looked after by social services and who are now getting ready to make the transition towards living independently.

These carers will provide a safe and secure environment where young people can learn a variety of skills which they will need throughout adulthood. These skills include cooking; cleaning; budgeting as well as more complex

tasks like developing social skills and relationships. The carers will guide and assist the young person to develop their confidence, interests and skills and to gradually reach their potential towards living independently.

Supported carers do not work in isolation. They are part of a network of people and professionals that work together to ensure the young person's needs are met. The carers will attend meetings when required so that their opinion and experiences are shared with the wider care team and considered. Supported carers are also expected to work within the care plan so that the best outcome for a young person is attained.

Supported carers provide a vital and valuable service, helping to equip young people with the skills and knowledge which enable them to live safely and independently throughout their adult lives.

Family-Based Respite

Family-Based respite carers offer children and young people in the community short stays in their home to assist families at difficult times. For some families this may be a one-off requirement while other families may need regular short periods of respite to assist them in caring for their children.

This resource is greatly needed as it is often the last resort before children are accommodated. Family-based respite carers need to be committed to helping vulnerable children and families in Glasgow and be available to take children on an emergency or a planned basis.

Shared Care

Shared Care is a family-based respite service for children with a range of disabilities. They may have a sensory impairment, autism, learning and/or physical disabilities. The children and young people have not been accommodated and usually live permanently with their own families.

Shared carers offer care in their own homes to children with a disability for around one weekend a month and possibly for a longer holiday period during the year. These carers offer families a well deserved break from the demands of caring for a child with a disability.

Shared carers are rewarded by the knowledge that they are enhancing a child's life and helping support a family and often become a very important and stable part of a child's life.

Copyright © 2014 Glasgow City Council - Social Work Services. Designed by Graphics and Communications, Education Services.

Shared Care Plus

Shared Care Plus is a family-based respite service for children who have a significant level of disability. Professional Shared Carers are linked in to either two or four children in rotation, offering each child around 42 days of care a year, usually at weekend and during school holidays.

Children are usually looked after in a carer's own home, but this can also be flexible; for instance if a family requires support caring for a child in the hospital.

Professional shared carers are able to offer a high degree of support to a child with very complex needs. In addition, they are able to offer the children themselves new experiences and opportunities.

Questions and Answers

Do Foster Carers Get Paid?

All foster carers get paid allowances to ensure that they can provide adequately for a child's day to day needs.

Glasgow City Council pays its carers a fee plus an allowance, which depends on the type of fostering you do. Our experienced staff team would be happy to provide you with further information.

As Glasgow City Council is a placing agency our carers have less time between placements than other agencies. In our experience, whilst this cannot be guaranteed, this means our carers are more likely to have children placed with them on a regular/ongoing basis.

Can I still work and be a foster carer?

For some types of carers it is acceptable to work e.g. respite and shared carers. For short-term carers we require the main carer to care full time for the children. Carers must be available to support and enable children to make the transition between living with their families and being in care. Short term fostering in particular involves appointments and meetings that will happen during the day and may be held at short notice and it is imperative that the main carer is available to attend these.

I have not had a child of my own. Can I still foster?

Yes. Glasgow City Council needs foster carers from all walks of life and backgrounds including people who have children and those who have not. The important aspects are the commitment and willingness to learn and develop within the role, as well as providing a safe and stable environment for children.

What support do foster carers receive?

All foster carers will be allocated their own supervising social worker who will guide and aid them through the process and offer support and formal supervision through regular visits.

Glasgow City Council is the largest provider of foster care in the whole of Scotland and our staff are highly experienced in supporting people through all stages of the fostering journey.

Copyright © 2014 Glasgow City Council - Social Work Services. Designed by Graphics and Communications, Education Services.

Families for Children will provide support and training right across all aspects of the fostering role and within the first year of approval all carers must undertake the mandatory 'Post Approval Training' which will equip foster carers with further skills and tools which will help them in the fostering role.

Foster carers are part of a wider team of professionals working for the best interests of a child and support can be drawn from this network.

I smoke. Can I be a foster carer?

Glasgow City Council has a legal duty to safeguard the best interests of children in all aspects of their health and welfare. Lifestyle factors such as diet and smoking are important because unhealthy eating habits and passive smoking are potentially damaging to the health of children.

We do not place children under 5 years of age in smoking households. This extends to all children with particular health needs. If you do smoke then we would ask that you do not smoke in and around the home or the children and that you do not allow anyone else to do so.

There is also an expectation that foster carers will provide children with a healthy and active lifestyle. Providing a varied and balanced diet and making sure that children's health and educational needs are being promoted is integral to this.

We expect our carers to be role models for our vulnerable children and to provide positive lifestyle choices which will follow them into adulthood.

What happens next?

If after reading this pack you want to take things further please call us on 0345 276 5555 and speak to one of our social workers.

The flow chart on page 15 shows the steps to being approved as a foster carer.

Do you need more information?

If you would like more information on any of the areas mentioned in this pack please do not hesitate to contact the Fostering Team at Families for Children on 0345 276 5555.

Testimonial

Before entering fostering, we were both employed within residential childcare for a number of years. During our time in residential care we supported many young people and enjoyed the experience. We were however, both acutely aware that many children and young people were denied the opportunity not only to grow up within family homes but to grow up with their siblings.

Sibling relationships should obviously last a lifetime and continue long beyond the period of time children are accommodated. This fact proved our main motivation for fostering.

After fostering for another organisation for five years we moved to Glasgow City Council's Families for Children service in December 2012.

Since this time we have been provided with an opportunity to look after a sibling group, and it has been refreshing to have the opportunity to work with them given our reasons for fostering in the first instance.

Obviously, like life in general, we have had our ups and downs over the last twelve months. However, we have been well supported by an insightful and understanding supervising social worker and the team at Families for Children.

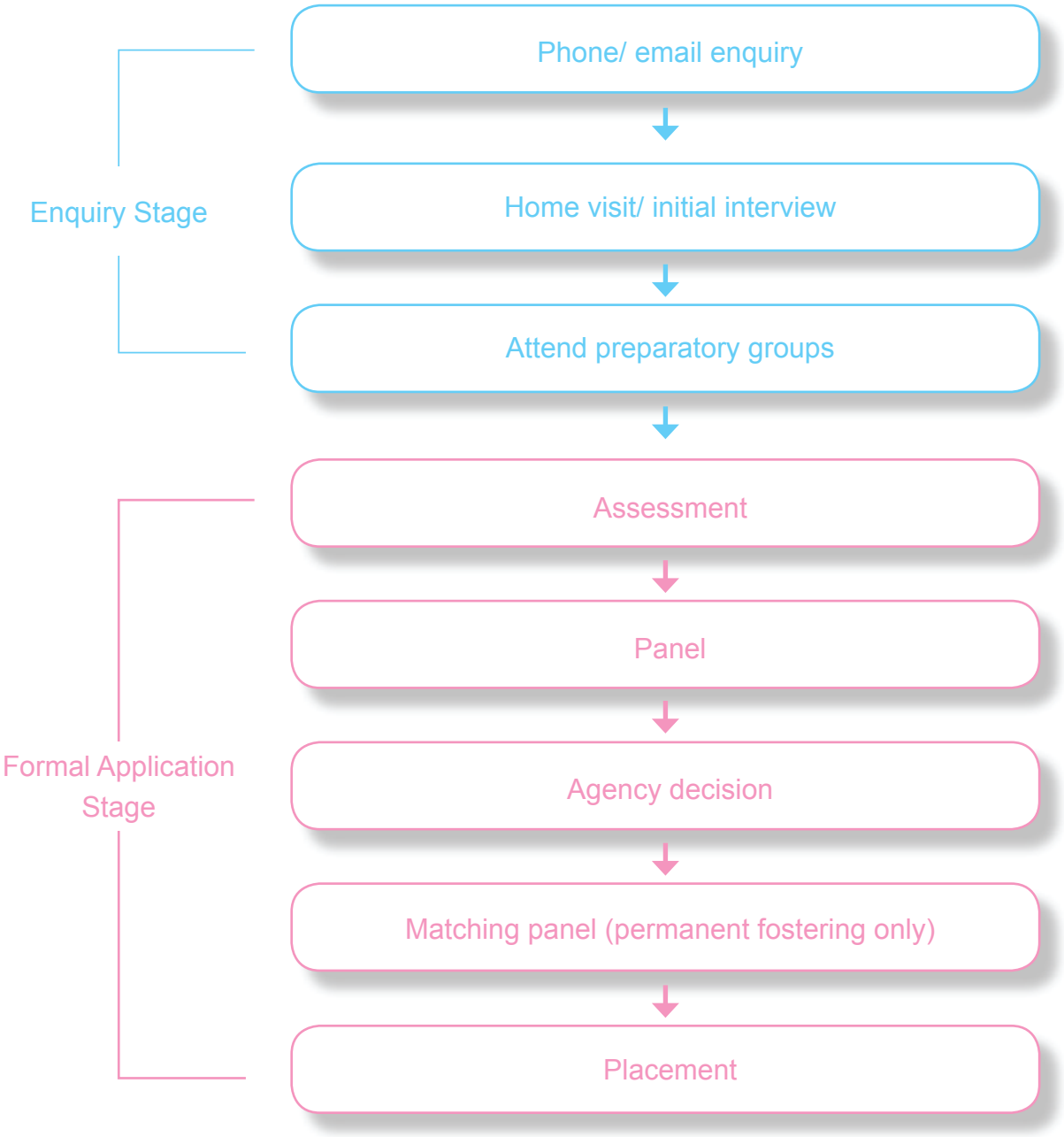
a foster parent in Glasgow

Being in a permanent foster placement has changed my life. I've been with my carers for nine years now and I'll be with them as I grow up, right through high school. That means a lot; knowing that there is always someone there when I need them, knowing that I have that security.'

a young person in foster care

Copyright © 2014 Glasgow City Council - Social Work Services. Designed by Graphics and Communications, Education Services.

The Process


Enquiry Stage
Phone/ email enquiry
Home visit/ initial interview
Attend preparatory groups
Formal Application Stage
Assessment
Panel
Agency decision
Matching panel (permanent fostering only)
Placement

families for children

glasgow cares for their future... could you?

Social Work Services
Glasgow City Council
Martyrs' School,17 Parson Street, Townhead, Glasgow, G4 0RX

Phone 0345 276 5555
email families.children@sw.glasgow.gov.uk
www.fosterglasgow.org

Copyright © 2014 Glasgow City Council - Social Work Services. Designed by Graphics and Communications, Education Services.