

Fostering Application Process

1. INITIAL ENQUIRY

There are 3 ways you can make an initial enquiry:

1. Complete an online form 24/7 at www.bolton.gov.uk/fostering, or
2. Call using the freephone number 0800 107 1564, or
3. Send an email to fostering@bolton.gov.uk

A member of our dedicated fostering team will contact you to answer any questions or queries you have about becoming a foster carer and to provide you with further information as required.



2. REGISTRATION OF INTEREST

If you are happy to progress with your application we will call you to complete a 'Registration of Interest' Form (ROI). The ROI will include questions about your household, health, finances and lifestyle.

This typically takes about 50 minutes to complete so we will call you at a time that suits you.



3. INITIAL HOME VISIT*

If the responses in your ROI indicate that you may be suitable for the role of foster carer, an initial home visit will be arranged with a qualified social worker. During this visit, we will discuss in more detail questions on your background, relationships, family composition, health, accommodation, finances and your parenting/child care experience. You will also be given an opportunity to ask any questions or discuss any concerns you may have.

*In current situation we may undertake initial home visits via a video call e.g. Skype, Whatsapp if available.



4. ESSENTIAL CHECKS

If the visiting social worker is happy to progress with your application, the necessary checks will then be completed on all applicants. This includes checks with the Police & Probation Service, the Local Authority and NSPCC. You will also be asked to provide the details of referees and you will be asked to visit your doctor for a medical check.

5. 'SKILLS TO FOSTER' TRAINING

You will then be invited to attend a preparatory training course called '*The Skills to Foster*'. Sessions are generally run one evening a week for 6 consecutive weeks or over 3 consecutive Saturdays. Following successful completion of the training you will be allocated an assessor who will complete your full fostering assessment



6. ASSESSMENT

Your assessment should take around 12 weeks and will include a number of visits and discussions on your background, your current circumstances and the skills and experience you can bring to fostering.

Your assessor will also visit the referees as well as arranging to speak to your employers, your birth children, ex-partners and support network.

A young person with experience of being looked after by foster carers will also interview you.



7. ASSESSMENT REPORT

Your assessment report will be compiled and you will have an opportunity to read the report and offer your thoughts on it.



8. FOSTERING PANEL

The assessor will then present this report to the fostering panel. You will be invited to attend and may be asked some questions. The panel will then make a recommendation in relation to your approval. You will be informed of their decision on the day.



9. APPROVAL

The panel's recommendation is then reviewed by the 'Agency Decision Maker' who will ratify the recommendation and formally approve you as a carer. This usually takes 5 days and you will then receive your approval letter through the post.