

# Welcome!



We want people to participate but please use the 'raise hand' facility to ask questions and contribute when others are talking.

Please be considerate to others - together we want to create a safe, open and reflective space to learn.

You can turn on live captions on by clicking on the 3 dots at the top of your screen if you need this.

The link to the feedback form will be put in the chat.

Please do take the time to complete it after the session.

Thank you!



# Norfolk Fostering Service & Foster East – who we are, what we do and how to become a foster carer

Amy Sibun, Interim Head of Fostering Services. Worked as a Social Worker and Team Manager across different areas of Norfolk Children's Services, including Assessment, Child in Need, Child Protection, Court Work and In Care, before stepping over to the Norfolk Fostering Service in April 2024.

Lynsey Pinnington, Practice Development Lead, Foster East. Worked in several fostering services for over 20 years as a Supervising Social Worker, Assessing Social Worker, Fostering Reviewing Officer and Fostering Team Manager. Her current role at Foster East is focused on learning from best practice and collaboration across the region with a focus on learning and development opportunities for foster carers.

Paul Farmer, Regional Participation Coordinator, Foster East. For 20 years Paul has worked with children, young people and their families in both the voluntary and public sector in various roles. Currently Paul is driving forward the participation of young people with care experience and those who care for them to help shape the services of Foster East and approaches to fostering across the Easter Region.



Funded by  
UK Government



FosterEast

# What is Foster East?

Across the UK there's currently a shortage of 6,500 foster families.

The numbers lay bare the recruitment crisis currently facing the fostering community as the number of children in care in the UK exceeds 100,000 (100,437) – the highest on record.

Since 2019 the number of fostering households decreased by 1,045 while the number of children in care has increased by 5,690.

( Fostering Network 2024 )

“The establishment of Fostering Recruitment Hubs is part of the DfE’s Recruitment and Retention Programme, designed to deliver end-to-end improvements in the foster carer recruitment and retention process. It aims to increase foster carer numbers and provide more loving homes for vulnerable children”

Mutual Ventures – DfE Commissioned Consultancy

## Foster East's Vision...

‘Transforming the way local authorities in the Eastern region work together to recruit foster carers, sharing best practice and expertise, to improve the experiences for foster carers and nurture the children and young people in our care’

# Who we are and how we work

- Foster East works across 11 LAs in the Eastern Region
- 4 work streams and a team of Recruitment & Retention Coordinators
- Workstreams
  - Data & Performance
  - Learning and Development
  - Marketing and Communications
  - Participation

# Achievements so far

- Regional collaboration on...
  - Central system to log and respond to enquiries
  - Regional participation with Young People with Care Experience and Foster Carers – Unique among all fostering hubs in the UK
    - “Ideal carer” consultation
    - Regional Participation Session in Foster Carer Training
    - Children who Foster
    - Regional Foster Carer Ambassadors
  - Joined up marketing strategy
  - Regional overview and development of pre and post training for Foster Carers
  - Regional data analysis on enquiries and their progression – how to add best value and create more success



# What Norfolk Fostering Service offer...

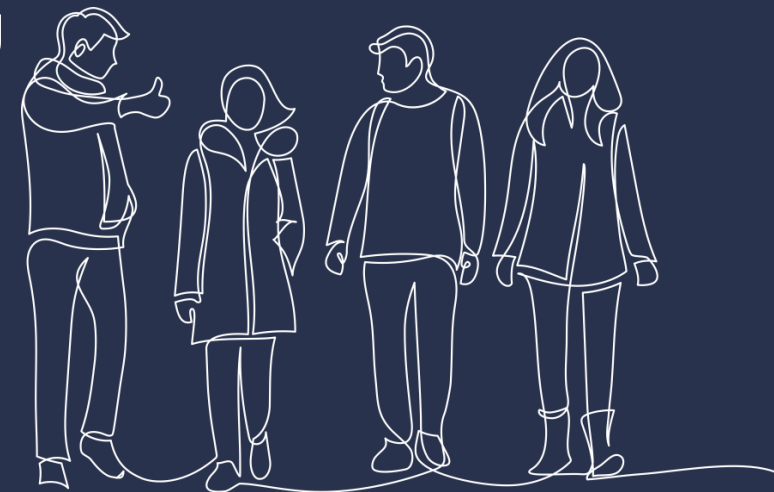


Extensive training package with specialist programmes, including Nurturing Resilience, Non-Violence Resistance and innovative Virtual Reality Headsets

Free access to the Norfolk Support Line and wellbeing service, including independent counselling for foster carers

Excellent network of existing foster carers, support groups for foster carers and their birth children, foster carer buddies and ambassadors

Advice and Mediation service commissioned from the Fostering Network, offering confidential and independent advice and support to foster carers



# What Norfolk Fostering Service are doing...



Fostering Therapeutic Service – Supporting Resilience Team, Fostering Clinician and Clinical Psychologist. Together they create bespoke packages of therapeutic support for fostering families, working alongside the networks around children.

Implementing and expanding innovative support models to increase stability, retention and peer support for fostering households.

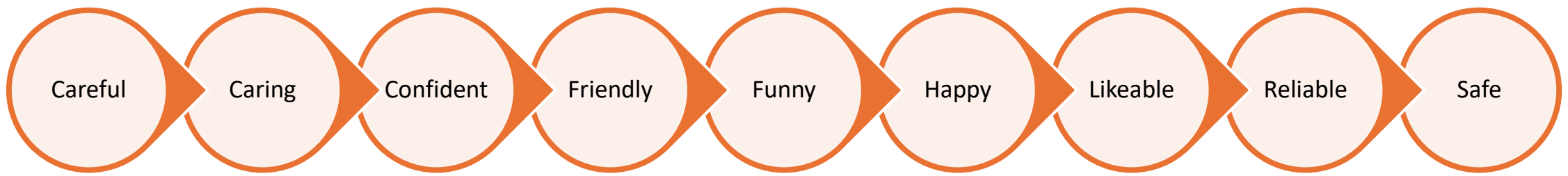
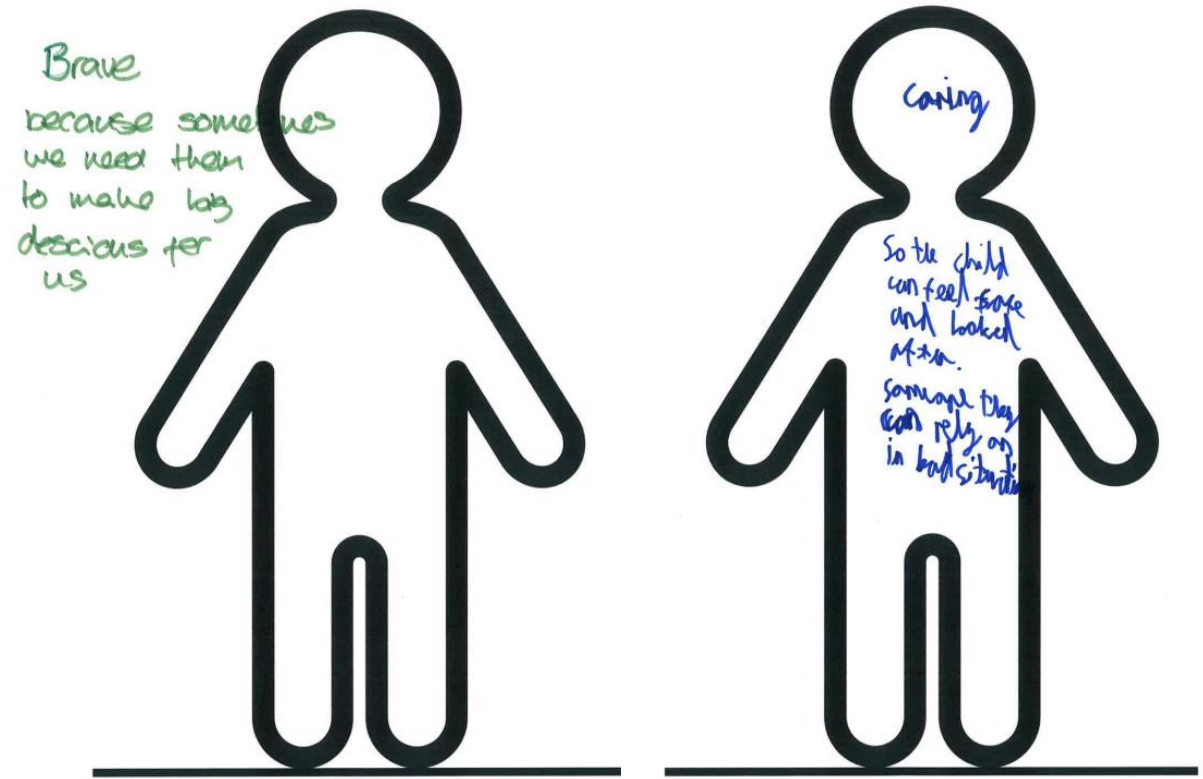
Mockingbird – it takes a village to raise a child. Creation of constellations of foster carers with a 'hub carer' at the centre of a community of fostering families.

Children with Disabilities – utilising learning from Mockingbird to create a community of support for fostering families caring for children with disabilities.



# What makes a good Foster Carer?







Click here to watch the video:

["When a child was brought to the police station on Christmas Eve, he didn't have a home to go to." - YouTube](#)

# Fostering Myths...

## I can't foster because...

- I am single
- I work
- I am receiving benefits
- I don't own my own home
- I don't have children or childcare experience
- I don't have a spare room
- English is not my first language



# Different types of foster care...

- Sleepover foster care (formerly known as 'respite')
- Short-term foster care
- Long-term foster care
- Enhanced foster care
- Parent and child foster care
- Short breaks foster care (for children with physical and/or learning disabilities)
- Emergency foster care
- PACE foster care
- New Roads foster care
- Staying Put arrangements

# Your step-by-step guide to a life-changing journey



1

## Initial enquiry

Within days of you expressing an interest, we'll be in touch.

Norfolk  
Fostering  
Service



## Initial Information Visit

Next, we'll arrange a 1-2-1 information visit with you

2



3

## Applying to become a foster carer

Following the initial information visit you will be sent an application form.



## Home visit

Once you've submitted your application, a social worker will visit your home.

4



**Buddy**  
can be  
provided  
on request





5

### Initial assessment

Your social worker will ask a series of questions and if successful you will be invited to the Skills to Foster training course.



### Full assessment

A detailed report and recommendation will be presented to the Fostering Panel.

6



### Skills to Foster course

Designed to double-check that fostering is right for you and your family.

7

8



### Meet the Fostering Panel

The Fostering Panel will make their recommendation of approval to our Agency Decision Maker (ADM).

9



### Final approval

Once approved, we will work closely with you to identify children who would be a good match for you and your family.

# Find out more...

**Foster East: 0330 0241177**

**fostereast.org.uk**

## Online Information Events...

Wednesday 20 November 12pm-1pm

Wednesday 27 November 12pm-1pm

To request a joining email:

[fostering@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@norfolk.gov.uk)

## Meet us in person...

Thursday 12 Dec 10:00- 14:00 - John Lewis (Norwich)

Wednesday 18 Dec 13:00 -15:00 Long Stratton Norfolk Family Hub

# Please let us know what you think



<https://forms.office.com/e/PqVNki3HUA>

