

Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minorities meeting 7 March 2018

Introduction to Merton's Fostering Recruitment Team

We are the team that recruits foster carers for the London Borough of Merton. We are a small and friendly team committed to providing the best possible service to people and families wishing to become foster carers for Merton.

We need local people to look after Merton children to help keep them in their communities. The number of children coming into care is increasing, so we need more foster carers and there is an urgent need for foster carers for teenagers and sibling groups.

We believe that a local, caring family is the best possible environment for a young person to be in when it is not possible for them to live with their birth parents. We are committed and proud to offer continued support and training to our foster carers as well as a generous allowance and many other benefits to help along the way. The London Borough of Merton was rated 'Good' with outstanding features in 2017 by Ofsted.

Why do children come into care?

There are many reasons why children come into care of in Merton and need to live with foster carers. This may be because parents are not able to offer 'good enough' care. They might be having relationship problems, ill health, mental health issues or addiction difficulties. Someone may have accidentally or knowingly injured their child, or a parent has died or gone to prison. We will always seek to find a suitable family member before a child is placed in foster care.

What is fostering?

Fostering is a way of providing a stable family life to a child who is unable to live at home; this can be anything from one night to a number of years.

Merton foster carers are part of a team of professionals helping to provide a child with a safe and nurturing environment, working together to create a positive future for them.

People from all walks of life can foster. Whatever your age, sexuality, ethnicity, employment status, whether you are single or married, rent or own your home. As long as you have a spare room, have some childcare experience and can demonstrate that you can offer a child stability and security you could put yourself forward to foster for Merton.

A good foster carer is someone who has patience, understanding, resilience, energy, enthusiasm and can be an advocate for the young person.

We support our foster carers every step of the way with:

- 24 hour support, 365 days per year
- Comprehensive and ongoing training
- An allowance of up to £507 per child, per week, plus additional grants

We have a long-established fostering service; many of our foster carers stay with us for years, as our foster carers in Merton feel well supported.

Find out more by contacting Rosie Bradley, Fostering Publicity and Recruitment Officer, on

020 8 545 4194, or email rosie.bradley@merton.gov.uk or call 020 8 545 4070, Email fostering@merton.gov.uk/fostering, or visit www.merton.gov.uk/fostering

