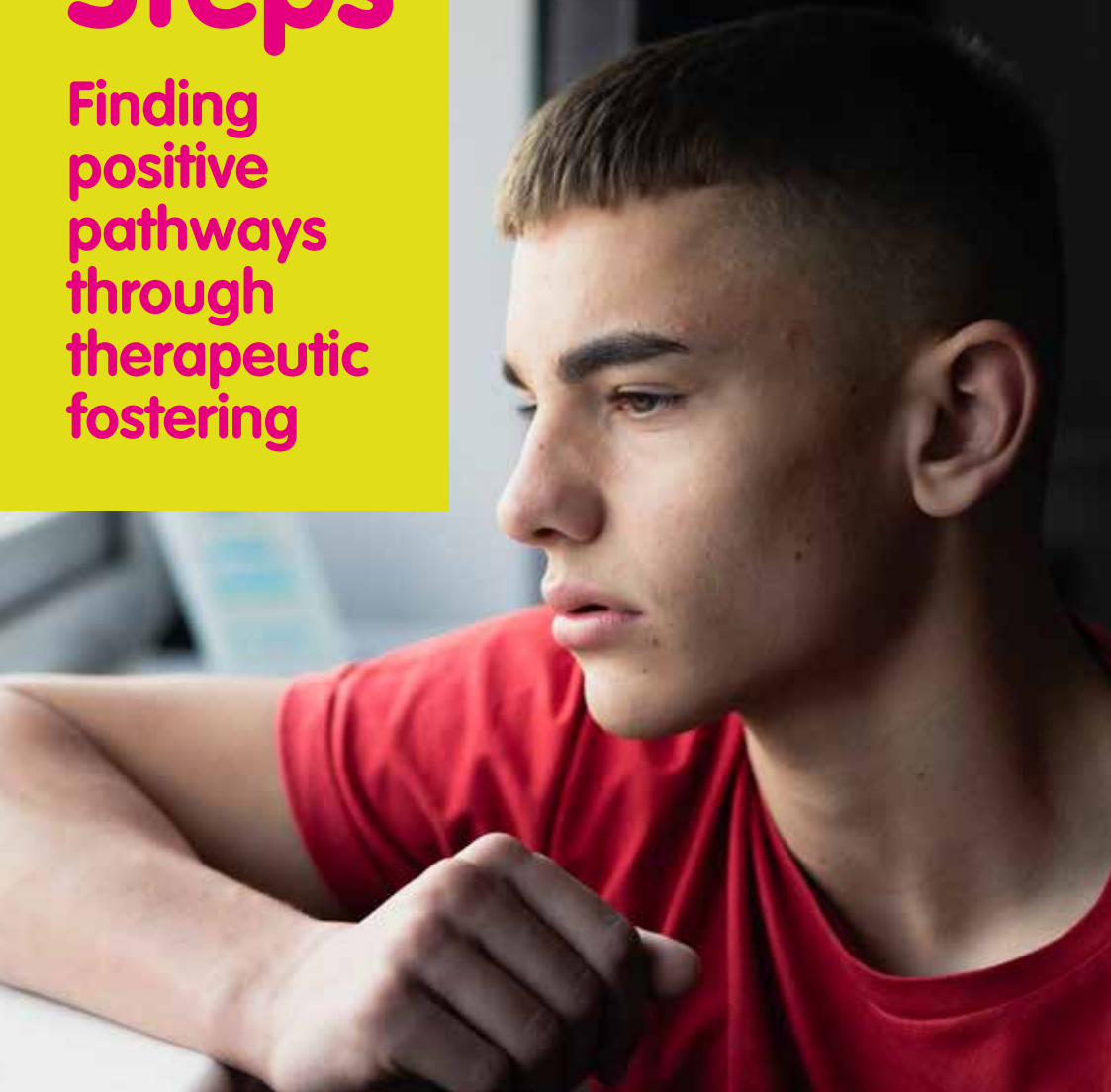


Next Steps

Finding positive pathways through therapeutic fostering





Join our growing team of specialist foster carers and help young people onto positive pathways through therapeutic fostering.

Here at Coventry City Council we are looking for more people to join our team and become therapeutic foster carers on our 'Next Steps' scheme. Our foster carers help make a real difference to the lives of some of the most vulnerable children and young people in our City.

We need more people with some previous experience in working with vulnerable young people to come forward and provide safe, stable and positive homes. We are looking for people with the skills and experiences to provide therapeutic, empathetic care to children and young people (usually aged 10-18) who are likely to have faced significant trauma, abuse or neglect. Working intensively, in a one-to-one situation in your home, our foster carers know that real change is possible.

Being a foster carer on our Next Steps scheme will be challenging, but we will be with you every step of the way, providing tailored support from a dedicated social worker and support workers to meet your needs as well as group and peer support and training to help you through and to celebrate the rewards of seeing the real difference that you are making to young lives.

“ The support you get as a Next Steps Carer is great! You are assigned your own social worker and they are always there to provide guidance and offer reassurance when needed and always getting back to you when you contact them. There is also lots of interesting training and you have the opportunity to get to know other Next Step carers and we have made friends with other carers on the scheme, so you feel a real part of a local community. ”

Denzil
Coventry Next Steps Foster Carer



Coventry City Council is on a journey to embed Relational and Restorative Based Practice throughout Children's Services. Restorative practice is about establishing, maintaining, and repairing relationships where difficulties have been experienced. It is a way of working WITH young people to encourage positive change. A Restorative approach will provide foster carers with caring language, and tools to strengthen their relationship with their young people.

Our support package is based on a model of attachment focused therapy using a strengthening family approach called Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP). This approach helps in building positive relationships between the child or young person and their foster carer and provides the foundation of support to allow them to take their next steps onto a positive pathway.

If you have relevant experience of working with vulnerable young people and have no other under 18 year olds in the home, we are offering alongside our specialist support and training, a significant financial package of around £48K per annum*. This way of working with young people intensively means that you have the opportunity to create and build with us a small team of local foster carers dedicated to changing young people's lives.

* This amount is inclusive of all costs associated with caring for a young person such as clothes, activities, holiday, birthday, etc. Read on for further details.



“ Until we actually had a child placed with us, we did not appreciate how physically and emotionally demanding this role would be, and the impact it makes on your whole life. But we can now start to see the positive changes in our foster child, and how our extended family have all become a huge part of his life. It is definitely all worthwhile, as you know every day that you are making a difference, and you are providing your young person with a safe and caring environment which they may never have had before. ”

Nicola
Coventry Next Steps Foster Carer

What is Next Steps Fostering?

For a number of reasons, young people might find themselves living in residential care, and this can, at times, be the best way to meet some young people's needs. However, for others their needs are best met within a supportive and nurturing home.

Next Steps fostering aims to support the transition of young people who have been identified as benefiting from leaving or avoiding residential care and instead being cared for in a nurturing fostering environment. Caring for children and young people on the scheme therefore means having patience, empathy and understanding that their life experiences and changes in situation can mean that they need additional support in feeling safe and settling into the fostering home.



Could you join our team and be a Next Steps foster carer?

We need foster carers who come from a range of different backgrounds and have different life experiences. We need to recruit more foster carers who have empathy and understanding for the young people accessing the scheme and the 'stickability' to work with us and believe that positive change is achievable.

If you think you could be a Next Steps carer – get in touch with us! We can chat through your circumstances and go from there.

What are we looking for in a 'Next Steps' foster carer?

- The motivation and commitment to help change a young person's future.
- At least two years' experience working with vulnerable children or young people, this may be through personal experiences, volunteering or through paid employment.
- Live within 20 miles of Coventry city centre.
- A spare room.

Due to the needs of the children and young people accessing the scheme, we require potential foster carers to have:

- No other under 18 year olds living in the household
- At least one carer in the household to be available 24/7
- Ability to work positively as part of a wider team of professionals
- Insight and understanding of trauma, abuse, and neglect. This includes an understanding of autism and mental health issues
- With our support and training, the ability to manage and support a young person who is likely, due to their experiences, to display challenging behaviours, in your home
- Adaptability and willingness to learn and implement new approaches
- High level of empathy
- Commitment and motivation to care for a young person who might have had multiple placement breakdowns

“ I came into fostering as I had always worked with children especially those with additional needs. When my own children grew up and left home it seemed the right time for me to look into it and I am really glad that I did! It's so rewarding to bring a child into your home and after a month, year, however long it takes, they start to blossom and the fear goes out of their eyes and they feel safe. ”

Shirley
Coventry Foster Carer



In return for the commitment required for the scheme, we are offering an enhanced support, training and financial package and the opportunity to work within a small community-based team of carers with dedicated support.

The Support Package:

We have a dedicated senior social worker and support workers who provides dedicated, specialist support to all of our Next Steps foster carers.

Although we are expecting potential carers to have some experience in this area of work, we also provide full initial training and will work with you to devise an ongoing personalised plan of training to meet your needs as well as access to a wide range of relevant training opportunities available to our wider fostering community and staff.

By working in this way to identify needs and inviting carers to help build a network of reflective learning and group support, our 'Next Steps' foster carers feel part of a local, supportive community providing accessible and consistent support and advice.

All Next Steps foster carers will also be invited to join the wider Coventry community of foster carers and will be able to come to a wide variety of support and social events. All our foster carers can access the comprehensive, locally delivered training programme for Coventry foster carers and staff as well as join in activities and consultations which help shape service delivery and work to improve outcomes for Coventry children and young people.



The Financial Package

We believe that the financial package for this scheme should recognise and reward the challenge and commitment required to help change young people's lives.

We have outlined the overall financial package below, but please do speak to the team if you are unsure of what this may mean for you.

Our weekly payment, paid whilst a young person is living with you, is **£923.46**, this includes the cost of caring for the young person (clothes, activities, holiday, birthday, etc).

We understand that many 'Next Steps' carers will be leaving other occupations to join the scheme or transferring from other fostering services. As such we will pay a joining allowance once the assessment has been completed and agreed at our fostering panel of **£468** up to four weeks. This should allow legal paperwork to be finalised and a match with a young person identified and introductions and/or organisations made to prepare everyone for the move to the fostering household.

Due to the commitment required we will also pay a 'retainer' for any gaps in placing a young person in the household after a previous young person has left. This is **£364** per week (up to a maximum of eight weeks per annum).

We will chat with you about the possibility of 'respite' care and any appropriate payments for breaks for foster carers as it will depend upon the needs of the young person placed.

How do the finances work?

The figures payable to foster carers (payment per child/young person to the fostering household) are as stated above and below and are paid directly into the designated foster carer's bank account weekly, in arrears:

Gross weekly payment:

£923.46

Gross annual equivalent:

£48,019.69

The above payments include an element which is designed to cover all of the 'day to day' costs of caring for the child or young person, such as food, clothing, activities, etc.

It is important to note that alongside the 'standard' personal tax allowance there are other fostering specific government allowances that mean that a significant proportion of fostering income is tax/National Insurance exempt. We can signpost you to further information about this during your assessment process, it is very straightforward. Also, as members of The Fostering Network, all Coventry City Council foster carers can access their free tax and general advice line.

What next?

If you have any questions and are interested in finding out more about this opportunity and working with us to change young lives, please get in touch:

Call us on **024 7683 2828**
Apply online **www.coventry.gov.uk/nextsteps** or come along to one of our information evenings - see **www.coventry.gov.uk/fostering** for more details.



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