



Hertfordshire Intensive Fostering Scheme (IFS)

Hertfordshire County Council's new initiative to support children into family homes, who would otherwise be cared for in a residential setting.

What is Intensive Fostering?

The intensive fostering scheme is being developed to provide safe and nurturing foster homes for children who would otherwise be cared for in residential children's homes where it is felt that foster care can best meet their needs. Foster carers will receive ongoing support from a dedicated team, including a Fostering Senior Practitioner, Therapeutic Parenting Practitioner and two outreach workers.


The scheme has been developed with similar principles as the Mockingbird Family Model, whereby foster carers and the children in their care are linked together.

The scheme will consist of six fostering households, ideally experienced foster carers or new foster carers who can demonstrate that they have transferable experience and skills to care for children who meet the criteria for this scheme



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Why become an Intensive Foster Carer?

IFS carers will be well supported, including fortnightly supervision with the Supervising Social Worker for the first six months after a child is placed.

Network, group and 1-1 support sessions will be delivered by the Therapeutic Parenting Lead and Supervising Social Worker, in addition to regular support from outreach workers who form part of the support network around the child.

In addition to the mandatory foster carer training, IFS carers will take part in a training programme specific to their role. This will consist of an individual 8-week programme and ongoing support, adapted in line with presenting needs.

Every child who is part of the scheme will be linked to a dedicated IFS outreach worker, who will offer support in both a planned and responsive way, including during times of crisis.

Sleepover arrangements may be available, however would need to be agreed by the service and must always consider the child or young person's needs.

IFS carers will receive enhanced payments, including £1000 per week skills payment, age related child allowance when they are caring for a child, plus additional allowances as per Hertfordshire County Council's payment policy, e.g., mileage expenses.

What is expected of our Intensive Foster Carers?

At least one IFS carer needs to be available full time and there can be no other children living at home under the age of 18.

IFS carers...

- Will provide a high standard of care to children looked after who may display a significant level of dysregulation and distress, with acceptance, emotional warmth, and nurture.

- Are child-centred and can act as a champion for the child or young person in their care.
- Have 'stickability', providing unconditional stability and encouragement to a young person, even during periods of high-level stress and challenge.
- Are able to provide support to children who may struggle to engage with or attend education.
- Feel excited about working therapeutically, learning new approaches and being able to make a difference to a child's life.
- Must be able to support and work with the child's birth family, in addition to the wider professional network, e.g., CAMHS and the Children Looked After (CLA) teams.
- Are committed to engage in a hub community of carers and children, including making themselves available for support groups, events, training, and activities.
- Will be included in the development of the IFS scheme. This could include buddying up with new IFS carers as well as providing ongoing support to those in the scheme.



If you are interested in becoming an Intensive Foster Carer or want more general information about the scheme, please contact

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