



PRESS RELEASE

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Why become a Foster Carer?

It can be difficult to hear or read about children who have suffered and experienced abuse and neglect. It is even more difficult to help these children and young people learn to trust and build a relationship with a total stranger.

Some may ask, "So why would you foster?" These are some of the comments from our foster carers.

"Some people look at me and think, Wow what an amazing job you do"... "I don't see that at all, I just think I'm doing something that is incredibly rewarding..."

"To see my husband bond with the child we are caring for and to see the smile on her face makes it all worthwhile."

"Becoming a foster parent was the best thing that I have ever done, seeing how he is developing on a daily basis."

"I never wanted to replace their mummy and daddy but more to provide them with a family environment, provide them with a good life but at the same time maintain their identity.... making sure they know they are part of another family."

There are different types of fostering that you could consider and these are:

Short term: This is a short stay of up to a year for children who may be able to return home to their birth families, or who may need a foster placement, whilst alternative plans are being made for permanence via the courts. Some of these placements are made in an emergency.

Long term: This type of fostering is usually for older children who are unable to live at home but may continue to see their birth family.

The Care Agency and Placement Team welcome applications from people from all backgrounds, as this brings a range of life experiences, skills and qualities that help meet the needs of children and young people in foster care.

Foster carers can be single, married, can be of any sexual orientation, religion and there is no age



limit to foster. The Fostering and Adoption Service is interested in anyone able to demonstrate commitment to children, stability and ability to support a child and meet their individual needs. You do not need any formal qualifications, but will receive foster carer training and support to achieve the training and development standards for foster carers in Gibraltar.

Head of Children Services, Nicole Viagas said: "Foster carers are persons who are willing to open up their hearts and their homes to children and young people who can be extremely loving, but also at times challenging. It takes patience, commitment and set boundaries to help children to accept their situation, and help them with a transition back to their birth families, or possibly to an adoptive family. Our foster carer programme has helped many children to get back into a supportive family set-up, and given them the opportunity to grow up in a balanced family environment that is hugely beneficial to their social and emotional development as members of our community. This is what makes fostering so special."

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, The Honourable Mr Neil F. Costa MP added "We are delighted at the success of our foster carer programme in Gibraltar, reflected in the fact that whereas there was only one foster family 3 years ago, now there are 7 loving families ready to make a transformative difference to the life of a child or young person. We encourage members of the public, who may be interested in fulfilling this role to come forward. Fostering has become an important piece of our social care network of services and we acknowledge its importance in ensuring that children, who may have difficult upbringings, are given a chance to grow up in a loving family environment, so they can look forward to the future with confidence."

The Care Agency Fostering and Adoption Team urge anyone who thinks fostering is for them not to hesitate to get in touch!

Please contact The Care Agency on 20078528 or email us on fostering@careagency.gov.gi