

## Fostering when you Work

*~ You do not have to give up work to foster, but you do need one carer with the flexibility to be home-based and available to care for children placed with you, as appropriate to their age and individual needs, both outside of school hours and for occasional one-offs and short-notice emergencies during the school day.*

*If relying on alternative cover, this needs to be a trusted family member or friend who knows the child well, is willing to positively take on this role, and to undertake an enhanced DBS check and social worker interview ~*

If you are working at the time of your fostering application and you plan to continue doing so when a foster child is placed, then please bear in mind the following:

- If hoping to reduce or adjust your working hours to fit around a foster child's needs, we advise you discuss this with your employer at an appropriate time, to ascertain whether this is an option
- If reducing hours or giving up 'work' to foster, you may want to explore whether benefits may be available to replace lost income – contacting your local CAB is one way forward
- If you are unsure about levels of fostering allowances and payments, and whether they will offset any loss of income, please speak with your stage 1 worker.

While you may feel confident leaving your own children at after school clubs or with a childminder, this is rarely a good option for foster children, as they need a home base where they can feel safe and secure and the stability of consistent care. Your work arrangements need to take this into account, including consideration of:

- What arrangements will be in place to get a foster child ready and out to school each morning?
- Is there scope to accompany a foster child to and from school each day (NOTE – if the school is some distance away a taxi service is generally provided)?
- What arrangements are in place if, for example, a foster child is sick, or a meeting has to be held during school hours?
- What arrangements are in place to collect a foster child from school, if necessary, and to provide care at the end of each school day?
- If needing additional cover on an occasional or regular basis, is there a close family member or friend willing and able to provide consistent care in a home environment to a potentially challenging child? Are they willing to be enhanced-DBS checked and to meet with a social worker?
- How will cover during school holidays be provided if you are working e.g. sharing the care between partners / trusted relative or friend/ scope to work flexi hours such as term-times only / scope to work at home?
- Remember that, while you may be confident for your own older children and teenagers to safely and happily entertain themselves with minimal checking while you work from home, a foster child or young person will generally need a consistently high level of supervision, ongoing structured activities, and clear routines throughout each holiday period.

*~ Please speak with your social worker if have any further queries or would like to discuss your personal work situation and plans in more detail or call 01473 264800.*