

Thank you for your interest in attending our fostering information session.

The session is designed to help you understand what foster caring involves and the needs of the children and young people who require foster care.

With a brief introduction where we introduce ourselves and go through the 'house rules' for the session we quickly launch into the main content.

This involves looking at the number, sex and age range of the children looked after in West Berkshire and the types of foster or other placements used to provide them with a safe and stable place to stay whilst in care.

We also discuss the types of backgrounds and experiences that have brought them into care including abuse, neglect, domestic violence etc. and the resulting trauma that this can cause young people.

We use video clips to illustrate brain development and how trauma can delay such development and the role of good parenting in repairing the delay. We also show a video based upon the views of several young people about foster care and what it means for them, a vital stage in understanding how difficult and scary the whole process is for them.

Also discussed is the qualifying process that potential carers go through on their route to becoming an active carer(s) for West Berkshire together with the support and training they receive, both initially, and on an ongoing basis. Our foster carers are an integral part of our professional team.

With opportunities throughout the session to interject and ask the questions that are important to you the information morning is the ideal basis to decide if fostering is for you and/or your partner and to go on to apply for inclusion on the next suitable preparation training group.

We will also clarify what the assessment process that follows the preparation group is and how the approval panel and final decision process works. By mapping the whole journey you can be confident in the quality of the process and your ability to see it through to a successful conclusion prior to starting your fostering career.

Whatever the outcome we know that you will finish the session with a much better understanding of the work we do and its importance to the vulnerable children and young people of West Berkshire.