

# Starting Your Fostering Journey With ISP

Your guide to the fostering application process

For more information about the foster process, scan the QR code below...



**Start your journey today**

Call us: 0800 0857 989

Visit: [ispfostering.org.uk](http://ispfostering.org.uk)

## By your side every step of the way

We understand that starting your fostering journey can feel overwhelming. While the process may feel a bit intrusive, this is simply to ensure that fostering is a good fit for you, and that you're right for fostering.

This is why we take such great care in getting to know you, ensuring that you, your family, and any child placed with you have a truly rewarding fostering experience.

And with ISP, you'll never be alone. We're here to guide you through each step at a pace that feels right for you, providing dedicated support along the way.

**“As soon as we applied to ISP, they did the rest and made the whole process as easy as possible for us!”**

Caroline, ISP Foster Parent

# Six Steps to Fostering

1

## Enquire

The first step is simple - reach out to us! You can call us on 0800 0857 989 or complete an enquiry form on our website.

2

## Initial Visit

We'll arrange a home visit or a video call to get to know you better and talk through the steps ahead.

3

## Apply to Foster

When you're ready, you'll fill out an application form. If successful, you'll be assigned an assessing social worker who will guide you through the assessment process.

4

## Assessment

This is the longest part, typically taking around 4-6 months, and includes:

- 8-10 visits from your social worker to help build a picture of you, your family, and the life you can provide for a child.
- Background checks, including local authority checks and an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Personal and professional references from people who know you well.
- 'Prepare to Foster' training to help you get ready for the role.

Your assessing social worker will create your 'Form F' — a comprehensive report that presents your suitability to foster.

5

## Panel & Approval

Once your 'Form F' is complete, it will be presented to an independent panel. You'll be invited to join, and will be asked some questions about the information shared in your report.

Your social worker will be there to support you, and the panel will work to make you feel comfortable. You'll receive your approval decision within 10 working days.

6

## Referrals & Matching

Once approved, our dedicated referrals team will gather your matching preferences and find the right child for your family.

While some matches happen quickly, others may take a bit longer, but rest assured that we're focused on finding the best possible fit. Our goal is to create a positive, rewarding experience for both you and the child, and we'll never rush placing a child unless we're confident it's right for everyone involved.

# Frequently asked questions

## What's the purpose of the assessment?

Our primary goal is to ensure that every child in our care will be safe, well cared for, and able to thrive in a supportive home. To make this possible, we take the time to learn about the lives of those interested in fostering, including hearing their life stories both from them and from people who know them well.

We're not looking for perfection - everyone's life experiences are unique, and those can bring valuable perspectives for young people in care. But we do need to be confident that each child will be safe and well supported.

## How long does it take to become a foster parent?

It typically takes around 4-6 months from the moment you first enquire to becoming approved. Although we'll always move at a pace that's right for you.

## Will you contact ex-partners?

We'll need to contact significant ex-partners for a reference, typically those you've been in a long-term relationship with or with whom you share children.

We understand this can create anxiety, but please be assured that our team is highly experienced and takes a balanced, professional approach. We recognise that not all relationships end on good terms. If you're concerned about us reaching out to an ex-partner, please discuss this with your assessing social worker, who will work with you to find an alternative solution if needed.

## What support will I receive during my assessment?

You'll have the dedicated support of your assessing social worker throughout your assessment. They'll guide you through each step and be there to answer any questions you may have. In addition, your local ISP team will check in regularly to see how you're doing and offer assistance whenever you need it.

**"We've felt 110% supported with ISP. We couldn't have done what we've done without the support we've received!"**

Emma & Ufuk, ISP Foster Parents

**Start your journey today**

Call us: **0800 0857 989**

Visit: [ispfostering.org.uk](http://ispfostering.org.uk)

**For more information about the foster process, scan the QR code below...**

