

The  
Fostering  
Network  
Y  
Rhwydwaith  
Maethu

# State of the Nation's Foster Care 2021

Spotlight on Wales

# About the survey

Every three years we conduct the State of the Nation's Foster Care survey to produce a reliable insight into fostering in the UK; to identify areas of good practice and understand where improvements are needed. This is the fourth time we have conducted this survey and, for the first time, we also surveyed our fostering service members.

As the largest independent survey of foster carers, we were pleased to receive responses from 3,352 foster carers, representing six per cent of fostering households in England, four per cent in Northern Ireland, eight per cent in Scotland and seven per cent in Wales. At the time of the survey, the foster carer respondents were caring for approximately 5,669 children. This represents around nine per cent of all children living in foster care in the UK. We also received 99 fostering service responses, which represents around 19 per cent of the total fostering service providers in the UK. By surveying our fostering service members, we have enriched our evidence base, offering a perspective from those who provide services, enabling us to gain a deeper insight into the challenges within the system and how they impact on the overall service.

Our 2021 surveys included questions on how well foster carers and fostering services believe children's needs are currently being met by the system, as well as key practice and workforce issues such as support, recruitment and capacity in the sector. The Fostering Network will use the findings of this report to influence the foster care agenda and create change by bringing them to the attention of national and local decision and policy makers.

We would encourage you to also read the main report available on our [website](#).

## How this report is structured

We have grouped our findings into three main areas of focus, represented in the following graphic. Each section will be labelled to show which area we are focusing on.



Children and young people

Foster carers

The fostering system

# The survey respondents in Wales

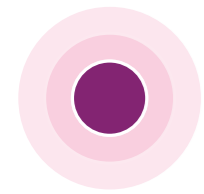
## Foster carer respondents:

- There was a total of 256 foster carer responses from Wales.
- 192 foster carers of the (circa) 1,700 local authority fostering households submitted a response representing approximately **11 per cent** of all local authority foster carers in Wales.
- **10 per cent** of the 192 local authority respondents were connected persons foster carers.
- 64 foster carers who foster for independent fostering providers (IFPs) submitted a response. It is not possible to calculate the proportion this represents of the total number of IFP foster carers as this data is not publicly reported in Wales.

## Fostering service respondents:

- Five out of the 22 local authority fostering services in Wales submitted a response to the survey. These services reported that they represent 743 fostering households, of which **25 per cent** are connected persons foster carers and **75 per cent** mainstream (unconnected) foster carers.
- Five out of the 24 independent fostering providers in Wales submitted a response to the survey (two of which were not for profit charity organisations). These services reported that they represent 404 fostering households.

In the main, the responses received from foster carers in Wales were consistent across those who foster with local authority and independent fostering providers. There were a small number of key differences which are identified in the relevant sections overleaf.



## Focus on children and young people

The Fostering Network's core aim is to ensure that children who need foster care have access to the best possible provision to enable them to thrive and exceed their expectations. All of the findings and recommendations contained in this briefing are made with children in mind. Research tells us that to improve outcomes for children we need the following ingredients:

- a skilled and respected social care workforce
- relationship and strength-based practices and procedures
- and child-centred practice with aspirational goals for our care experienced population.

The following section outlines some key findings from the survey and makes recommendations around how we can ensure all children have the best possible experience of foster care.

### Matching in foster care (foster carer survey only)

Finding the right foster family for a child is vitally important to help them achieve good outcomes. Ensuring sufficient, child-centred and up-to-date information about the child is shared with the prospective foster family is something foster carers tell us is essential, as is the sharing of relevant and appropriate information about the foster family with the child. When this is done in a timely fashion it increases the chance of the match being successful.

### Key findings:

- **78 per cent** of foster carer respondents from IFP services felt that their most recent match with a child (in the past two years) was positive, in comparison to **88 per cent** of respondents from local authority services.
- Some examples of excellent matching were provided, however, high levels of emergency placements with limited referral information were also reported.

Matching is a complex and detailed exercise which undoubtedly supports stability and resilience. The level of emergency placements reported across the UK warrant further exploration and this is true for Wales specifically. Matching practice can be significantly improved when the interconnectivity of services and professional relationships are at their best. The Fostering Wellbeing Programme in Wales has been successfully bringing together everyone in the team around the child to improve perspective and understanding of each other's role. The pilot is due to complete at the end of March 2022 with the evaluation of its impact awaited.

### Fostering Wellbeing: A model for improving multi-agency working

Fostering Wellbeing, funded by Welsh Government and delivered by The Fostering Network in Wales, is a programme that aims to improve the wellbeing and educational outcomes for children in care by improving multi-agency working through a partnership framework across social services, health and education.

The programme specifically addresses the role of the foster carer within the team around the child and the building of strong links and shared knowledge base within that team. Read more about the programme [here](#).



**[We are] asked often if we will take a child. We agree, then get told days later the child is going elsewhere. We quite often cancel plans in preparation [then get] late notification placement not happening. Too many carers are asked at the same time to take a child.**

Foster carer respondent



### Recommendations for fostering services:

1. Whilst emergency placements cannot be completely avoided, creative planning should be facilitated wherever possible. There are likely to be many people who will know important information about the child in an emergency, such as teachers or nursery staff. Finding the person who knows the child best can enable matching to take place in an emergency.
2. Foster carers should be provided with robust information at the enquiry and assessment stage to ensure that the likelihood of children requiring care in an emergency is fully understood and accepted as part of the role.

### Recommendation for Welsh Government:

3. Welsh Government should consider the proposal to continue funding the Fostering Wellbeing Programme and extend the funding to include every local authority area and subsequently every child looked after in Wales.

## Relationships (foster carer survey only)

The building of warm and positive relationships is at the heart of good fostering and social work practice. Foster carers play a key role in maintaining, developing, nurturing and supporting children's relationships with their families. The survey this year asked foster carers to think about how well they are supported to keep in touch with former fostered children, when it is appropriate to do so. The results across the UK were worrying given the vast research on the importance of maintaining relationships for children.



**I still Skype my first foster child (now aged 34 who left us 14 years ago) every single day and visit her several times a year. I [am] the nearest thing to family she has.**

Foster carer respondent



### Key findings:

- **44 per cent** of IFP foster carers and **51 per cent** of local authority foster carers in Wales stated that they were not supported to remain in any form of contact with children they had previously cared for.
- IFP foster carers stated that the two primary reasons for this contact ending was either due to the child's choice not to maintain contact, or that they were not given permission to remain in touch with the child.
- Local authority foster carers reported that the two main reasons for not keeping in touch with children was due to a lack of consent from their service to do so, or primarily a lack of consent from adopters.

The comments section for this part of the survey was lengthy, detailed and poignant. Foster carers from right across the sector wrote about what they perceive to be the 'cruel' practice of ending significant relationships for children who have experienced so much loss already.

### Recommendations for Welsh Government:

4. All services should have a duty to promote relationships and direct contact between a child in foster care and anyone that the child has a personal and ongoing relationship with, if it is in their best interest. This may include siblings or former foster carers. [The Keep Connected Principles](#) should be included in national guidance.
5. Leaders in Wales should set expectations in relation to supporting significant relationships for children looked after. Data should be collected and reviewed to ensure that practice in this area changes and is aligned to the good practice Welsh Government has endorsed in the [Contact Good Practice Guide](#) produced by the National Adoption Service which includes The Fostering Network's Keep Connected Principles.



**No contact feels like I have abandoned them and they must feel like I have too.**

Foster carer respondent



## When I am Ready (both surveys)

Most young adults live at home after turning 18. They benefit from the stability, ongoing support and chance to develop their independent living skills. When I am Ready is a Welsh Government service for 18- to 21-year-olds (up to 25 if the young person is still in full-time education) who want to stay living with their former foster carer. The scheme allows care experienced young people to benefit from staying with their foster family. The intention is for care leavers to be better equipped for adult life, before they move on to independence.

Given the demographics of children looked after, and the higher proportion of teenage placements made in the independent fostering sector, we would expect to see a far higher number of When I am Ready arrangements for young people in Wales. This would benefit from further exploration to ensure that young people are able to remain living with their foster families until they are 'ready'. Providing permanence into adulthood is a critical factor to support achieving good outcomes for children and aligned to the policy directives of Welsh Government.

Some foster carers in When I am Ready arrangements experience a reduction in financial support which, in turn, can have a detrimental effect on uptake of the schemes. In addition, as young people in these arrangements are no longer considered looked after, if the foster carer has no other children in foster care living with them, their fostering service may remove their approval status meaning foster carers can no longer foster unless they complete the approval process again (which can take many months).

### Key findings:

**21** foster carer respondents reported having cared for a young person under a When I am Ready arrangement. These 21 foster carers represented:

- **nine per cent** of the total local authority foster carer respondents
- **five per cent** of the total IFP foster carer respondents.

Our survey findings, supported by anecdotal evidence from our members, shows that some fostering services are not ensuring that their foster carers maintain their approval, even when it is their intention to return to fostering. This, and the drop in financial support, are likely to be key barriers to more young people entering When I am Ready arrangements.



**I would like to see When I am Ready carers to be paid appropriately for the skills we have.**

Foster carer respondent



**When I am Ready could be improved by having more consistency across local authorities and also the recognition that just because a young person has reached 18, their needs often remain the same (whilst there is also a need to promote further independence), funding and support provided should take into account the specific needs of the young person and their carers (not just be based on set amounts for a When I am Ready scheme).**

Fostering service respondent



## Recommendations for Welsh Government:

6. A full cross departmental review of how successfully When I am Ready has been implemented in Wales should be undertaken. This should involve young people and all key stakeholders and include:

- measuring the impact and outcomes for young people
- how the scheme has been funded
- clarity of responsibility
- the status of arrangements
- the training provided to foster carers and staff
- what policies are currently in place, and
- when the scheme is discussed in the care planning process.

7. The Government should ensure that When I am Ready is properly costed and then fully funded. Additionally, there should be monitoring of the implementation of the policy to ensure practice is in line with national requirements and to share learning from best practice models.



## Focus on foster carers

### Placement utilisation (foster carer survey only)

Having empty, available placements is critical for services to enable good matching for any new children requiring foster care. Whilst there is no recommended good practice in respect of the levels of vacancy rates, the survey findings show that, one in five households approved with IFPs were not being utilised. The reasons for this are unknown and would benefit from further exploration to ensure that fostering provision is well utilised and accessible for children who need it.

The fostering workforce is unique and can be utilised in innovative ways to strengthen families to remain together and prevent children from becoming looked after. Our tried and tested project Step Up, Step Down in Northern Ireland has successfully demonstrated what can be achieved. With Wales continuing to report some of the highest numbers of children in care in the world per 10,000 of the population, we would advocate exploration into this innovative scheme. A logic model for Step Up, Step Down is available in Appendix 1.

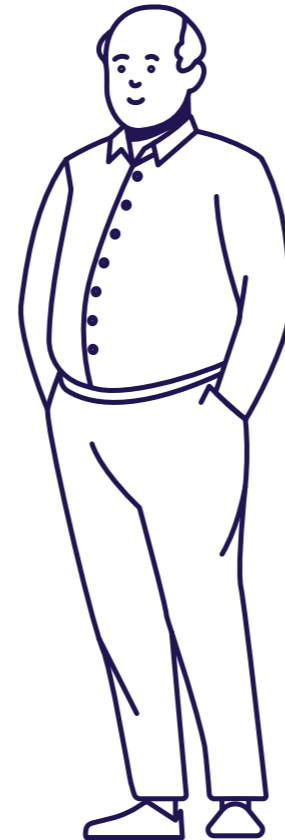
### Key findings:

- Just over **20 per cent** of IFP foster carers and **12 per cent** of local authority foster carers reported having no children placed in their care.



**[Sufficiency planning could be improved] if we all used the same systems to collect data and used the systems the same. We also need more support to manage the data.**

Foster service respondent



### Utilising foster carers' unique skill set to prevent children entering care: Step Up, Step Down

Support care sits at the interface of fostering services and family support services, providing care and support to families on the edge of care. Support care programmes provide holistic and needs led support, with foster carers meeting regularly with parents in a mentoring role, alongside providing short breaks.

Step Up, Step Down is one support care programme which you can read more about [here](#). This model provides a fostering family community based model that offers families mentoring, training and community support with the aim of keeping families together. It utilises the unique skills and experience of foster carers in working with children and their birth families in their community.

### Recommendations for Welsh Government:

8. The fostering data collection introduced to local authority fostering services as part of the National Fostering Framework should be extended to all fostering services in Wales (local authority, IFP and third sector). Building and reporting upon an accurate picture of the resources available will support services to make best use of all fostering provision.
9. The introduction of a national register of foster carers in Wales should continue to be considered and scoped. The benefits of this approach for children, foster carers and services are extensive and include closing safeguarding risks and creating transparency across provision. Read more about The Fostering Network's position [here](#).
10. Leaders in Wales should explore innovative models of foster care that utilise foster carers' unique skill set and prevent children from becoming looked after.

## The wider fostering household (foster carer survey only)

Any child growing up in a fostering household is likely to experience different family norms and they will inevitably play a part in supporting the children and young people in foster care.

### Key findings:

- Local authority foster carers in Wales are more likely to be caring for other children alongside fostering than those who foster with an IFP.
- Just under **40 per cent** of the local authority foster carer respondents reported caring for other children alongside fostering. These children spanned right across all age groups and included birth children, adopted children, children living under Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) and grandchildren.
- Just over **10 per cent** of IFP foster carers reported to have other children living at home, these were almost exclusively birth children and all over the age of 11 years. The majority were aged 16-17 years.

## Recommendation for fostering services:

11. Given the importance of placement stability and ensuring the rights and wellbeing of all children, services in Wales may wish to monitor that the needs of other children are considered as part of assessment, supervision, support and ongoing learning and development. Fostering is a whole family task and the whole family should be provided with support to be at their best.

**Fostering is a whole family task and the whole family should be provided with support to be at their best.**

## Learning and development (foster carer survey only)

The Fostering Network were proud to support the work to introduce a National Post Approval Learning and Development Framework for foster carers in Wales. We have cited this as a model to be replicated across the UK, it is an example of excellent practice. However, the responses from foster carers in Wales indicate that the framework may not yet be fully embedded and therefore it may not yet be fulfilling its potential.

### Key findings:

- Only **57 per cent** of local authority foster carers in Wales stated that they had an agreed learning and development plan, **31 per cent** stated that they did not have a learning and development plan and **12 per cent** responded that they did not know.
- **66 per cent** of IFP foster carers reported having a learning and development plan, **22 per cent** stated that they did not and **12 per cent** did not know.
- In comparison, **65 per cent** of all foster carers across the UK reported having an agreed learning and development plan.

## Recommendation for Welsh Government:

12. The Fostering Network would recommend that an independent evaluation of the learning and development framework would be of benefit to services and foster carers in Wales, to ascertain what difference the framework is making and how well embedded in practice it has become.

**Only 59%**  
of foster carers in Wales stated that they had an agreed learning and development plan

## Approval status (foster carer survey only)

Fostering is not a single entity and it is important that it can be adaptable to children's different circumstances. There are many different types of foster care, including but not limited to:

- short-term foster care, where permanency plans are under consideration
- parent and child foster care, which offers a parent/parents and their child tailored support
- long-term foster care, which secures permanency for children to remain living with a specific foster family until reaching adulthood or leaving care
- short break foster care, where carers can provide anything from a short break of a few hours a week to a couple of weekends a month
- family and friends foster care (also known as connected persons foster care or kinship foster care).

The findings from the survey in Wales identified significant differences between local authority and IFP approval statuses in terms of age range and approval type. Approval can sometimes be restricted in order to protect a foster carer and/or their wider family. Whilst this may be considered the best option at a point in time, it does not reflect that children's needs do not necessarily correlate to their age, nor that children grow and nor that foster carers gain valuable experience, particularly when supported to care for children they had not originally felt confident to care for.

Regulations in Wales require that services complete a full annual review and return to panel if they wish to change an approval status in the first year of approval. Many services uphold this requirement for all changes of approval and therefore frequent amendments to status can be time and resource consuming for services and panels.

### Key findings:

- All foster carers approved to foster with IFPs reported to be approved to care for children 0-18 years or 5-18 years, thus providing wide matching opportunities for children.
- IFP foster carers were also more likely to be approved to care for up to three children, with just under **50 per cent** of approvals having capacity to care for three children or young people.
- This is in contrast to local authority fostering approvals where a much wider variety of statuses exist, all with extensive restrictions and limitations.
- The majority of local authority foster carers held approval statuses to care for one or two children, less than **30 per cent** of approvals included the capacity to care for three children.

## Recommendation for local authority fostering services:

13. Local authority fostering services in Wales may wish to consider an assessment approach based on broader approval statuses alongside ensuring robust matching procedures and placement stability processes.

## Recommendation for Welsh Government:

14. The Welsh Government should consider the introduction of legislation, similar to that in Scotland, that puts a duty on local authorities to ensure siblings or those with sibling like relationships, including foster siblings, are supported to stay together, where appropriate. Where it is not appropriate, steps should be taken to help them stay in regular contact with each other and to nurture their relationships.

## Broader approval statuses

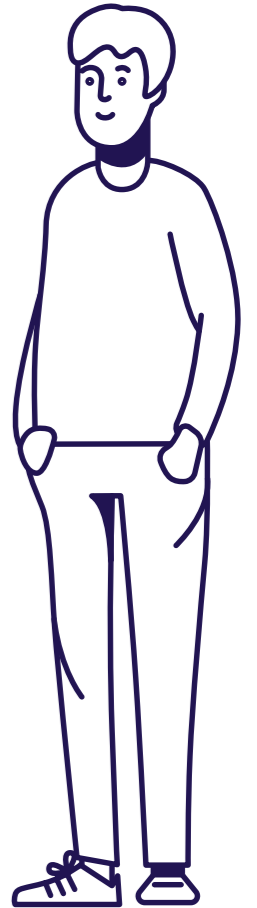
provide wider matching opportunities for children.

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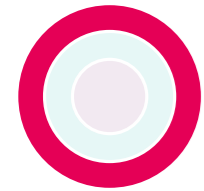
The lack of choice in placing and matching is of some concern, that and having to place outside of the local authority where language and cultural needs may not be met.

Fostering service respondent

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## Focus on the fostering system

This year, in addition to surveying foster carers, we also surveyed our fostering service members to provide a more holistic understanding of the issues and barriers faced by the fostering sector. The findings in this section, from the fostering services' survey only, provide an insight into the challenges faced by fostering services in their efforts to ensure continuous improvements for children in care. A total of 10 services responded to the survey. Five local authority fostering services and five IFPs.

Fostering services in Wales were asked what they considered to be working well in fostering, what was not working well, and what they would wish to improve.

### What is working well

- Relationships – almost all services reported to have strong, trusting relationships between staff and foster carers.
- Recruitment – improvements in recruitment practice were cited by some services to be the main thing that is working well in fostering.



**I am not classed as a professional in social workers' eyes and "just" the foster carer.**

Foster carer respondent



### What is not working well and what they would wish to improve

- Allowances and payments – services reported that the current allowances in Wales do not cover the real costs of caring for children looked after and that this prevents new applicants enquiring to foster. Services called for an increase in allowances to reflect that Wales has aspirational expectations for children looked after. They also called for simplification and removal of the age bracket 5-15 years.
- Lack of placement choice – services reported to be unable to secure good matches for children because of a lack of fostering households in their own service and a lack of access to local placement provision. Services would like to see a significant increase in access to local, quality placements for children.
- Staffing sufficiency – services reported that staffing levels were not sufficient to provide the required level of support for foster families. Services would like to achieve staffing levels which enable them to fulfil best practice requirements and improve standards in Wales.
- Trauma-informed practice – services expressed concerns about access to training and additional services for those caring for traumatised children. Services would like children looked after to have priority status for all services across health and education.
- Peer support and out of hours support – improving the support available to foster carers through improved peer support services and specific out of hours provision for fostering families was highlighted as an area for improvement. For services who already have this provision they cited that retention and stability had improved as a result.

### Good practice model for delivering foster care: Mockingbird

Mockingbird is an innovative model of delivering sustainable foster care led by The Fostering Network in the UK. The model is structured around the support and relationships of an extended family and nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families, supporting them to build a resilient and caring community.

There are approaching 90 Mockingbird constellations across the UK at the time of writing, with more constellations launching throughout the year. These constellations support nearly 3,000 children, young people and adults.

207 Mockingbird carers completed the State of the Nation's Foster Care 2021 survey. Mockingbird carers rated the peer support they receive as higher than other foster carers, with **87 per cent** of Mockingbird carers stating this was excellent or good compared to **67 per cent** of non-Mockingbird carers. Mockingbird carers were also more likely to recommend fostering to those who are considering it (**69 per cent**) compared to non-Mockingbird carers (**54 per cent**).



**I would like to have more recognition for our complete involvement in the holistic life of our children from the child's placing authority which ultimately is responsible. We live with the child. We are involved in all their daily living aspects, emotions, achievements.**

Foster carer respondent



**The amazing capacity for love and care of our foster carers continues to be the bedrock of fostering. Positive working relationships between foster carers and their supporting social workers works well.**

Fostering service respondent



# Improving foster care

The survey asked foster carers: What one thing would you like changed to make foster care better? A multitude of valuable responses were received from foster carers at the heart of foster care delivery in Wales. Many of these responses align with those received across all four nations, the summary below is specific to the top three messages from foster carers in Wales.

## 1. Continuity and capacity of social work staff

Many foster carers cited this as the one thing that they would wish to change. Foster carers reported that the children in their care would benefit greatly from increased social work staff to enable foster carers to fulfil their role to the best of their ability. Foster carers shared examples of high turnover both in respect of their own supervising social worker and even more so for the children's social workers. Foster carers would like to be able to build relationships with social workers and they would like the children in their care to be afforded stability and continuity of social worker. A wealth of research and evidence exists in relation to the difference that positive, long-lasting relationships can make to outcomes for children and young people.



**I get great support from my support worker as she's been with me for nine years.**

Foster carer respondent



### Key findings:

- During the course of the previous two years, **53 per cent** of foster carers had the same supervising social worker, **29 per cent** had two, **12 per cent** had three and **six per cent** had four or more.



**My child has had three social workers in nine months.**

Foster carer respondent



### Recommendation for Welsh Government:

15. Leaders in Wales should build a greater understanding of continuity and capacity of social work staff by introducing performance measures and practice standards similar to those in England on maximum caseloads, and systems to monitor and review the impact on children.

## 2. Status of the foster carer

Foster carers provided many examples of times when they have felt 'dismissed', 'ignored' and that their role in general is not valued by the rest of the social care workforce. Many people have chosen to switch careers from nursing, teaching or running a business to become a foster carer and whilst they accept that their new role is now 24/7 and comes with no annual leave, sick pay or pension, they report that they did not expect the lack of respect for their commitment, skills and dedication. This is a long-term and well reported issue affecting the fostering sector.



**Not all social workers or other professionals in a child's care treat foster carers as professionals. Some will not take your concerns seriously, and make decisions that are not in the child's best interest without consultation.**

Foster carer respondent



## Recommendations for national and local decision makers:

16. Leaders in Wales should review their commitment to the [Foster Carers' Charter](#) to ensure that it is fully embedded across every fostering service and local authority and that the expectations are understood and accepted at every level.
17. We would recommend that leaders in Wales introduce a social care staff induction process which includes shadowing opportunities within fostering services and directly with foster carers, to learn about the valuable role which they undertake from those with lived experience.

### Recommendation for Welsh Government:

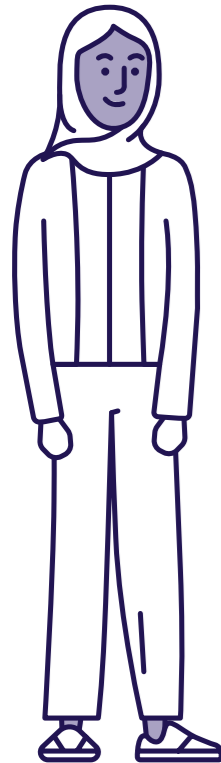
18. Welsh Government should consider the proposal to continue funding the Fostering Wellbeing Programme. This would ensure the widest possible reach across all local authorities and facilitate the critical relationship building between, foster carers, social care staff, education and health to enable a true team around the child approach in Wales.

### Recommendation for fostering services:

19. All fostering services should actively engage with, consult and listen to their foster carers to ensure continuous service improvements and the retention of high quality and experienced foster carers.

### 3. Rewards and payments

Foster carers would like to receive an allowance which reflects the full cost of caring for a child and a payment to reflect their role as a valued member of the team around the child. This message was repeated throughout all sections of the survey. Foster carers provided examples of receiving the same level of allowances for several years and felt strongly that they should be reviewed in line with the real cost of caring for a child in the current day and age. To attract new applicants to foster, with the skill set and commitment that is required for our most vulnerable children to thrive, the payments must be sufficient to fulfil the task.



**" Allowances are only adequate on a general level, it needs to be able to meet above basic needs and be able to support aspiration in children's lives.**

Fostering service respondent

**"**

#### Recommendation for Welsh Government:

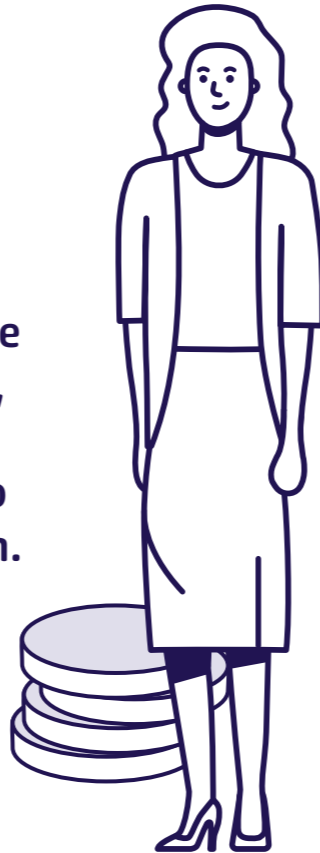
20. We are aware that the Welsh Government have already procured and completed a full review into the allowances for children living in foster care. On behalf of children, foster carers and services in Wales we urge government leaders to expedite their work in this area for the benefit of current foster families and future potential foster carers.

**"**

**We are expected to take children on holidays and give them good travel memories, as well as their general upkeep, so they don't feel so different from other children. The pay needs improving.**

Foster carer respondent

**"**



#### Concluding comments

We are grateful to everyone who completed the survey and we look forward to working with our members and key decision makers in Wales to explore how we can take forward these recommendations to ensure that foster care in Wales is the very best that it can be.

This report is part of a series. Please visit our website to [read more](#).

**57%**  
of carers in Wales  
would recommend  
fostering.



**"**

**The current system is failing children - there is not enough financial support, permanent social workers for children, lack of communication and organisation. The whole system needs addressing as I'm sure more money would be saved if working practices were better and more children's needs met.**

Foster carer respondent

**"**

**"**

**It's a wonderful way to create a family which is unique and beneficial to your community, it's a different life with lots of movement but very rewarding.**

Foster carer respondent

**"**

# Appendix 1: Step Up, Step Down Logic Model

Number of looked after children rising.

Increased need for families on the edge of care who face a number of challenges and often lack engagement with their local community.

Children on the edge of care experience fewer educational outcomes than children in foster care.

Families with children on the edge of care need flexible services to respond to crisis when necessary.

Families with children on the edge of care often feel a sense of fear regarding statutory services.

Successful pilot over five years, from 2016-2021 in Northern Ireland. Currently extending the project across the UK.

Supports Welsh Government's manifesto to: "help prevent families breaking up by funding advocacy services for parents whose children are at risk of coming into care."

## Situation Analysis

### 01: Strategies

- Preventative approach: flexible, wraparound, needs-led, nurturing and trauma informed
- Support care model uses foster carer role including mentoring/family support
- Empower families to gain a community support network
- Voluntary and statutory partnership to reduce barriers between families in need and statutory services.

### 02: Inputs

- Service users: children on the edge of care and their families
- Staff: one supervising social worker and one project worker
- Family Support Foster Carers
- Consultant within The Fostering Network
- Management in local authority/trust and The Fostering Network
- Administration
- Utilities and premises
- Mileage costs for staff and carers, transport for families
- Phones and computers for foster carers and staff
- Marketing and promotion
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Training for staff and foster carers
- Family social workers to make referrals.

### 03: Outputs

- Recruit and assess foster carers
- Provide training and resources for foster carers
- Establish foster carer peer support groups
- Foster carers support families for 12-15 months to mentor parents weekly and provide short breaks monthly
- Project worker to engage families in programmes of learning, parenting training and children's therapeutic nurture groups
- Project worker to provide community supports and family activities, including school holiday/weekend events and a residential, as well as ensuring co-production and ongoing evaluation.

### 04: Outcomes

- Reduce the number of children coming into care by defusing crisis situations and facilitating family stability.
- Through mentoring and training, parents will have the capacity, skills and knowledge to overcome adversity, creating safe, stable family relationships.
- Children will have tools to help them regulate, and parents will be able to co-regulate their children.
- Parents and children will be connected to their communities through participation in local activities, strengthening the supports available to help prevent and address crisis.
- The capacity of parents and children to learn and grow as a family will be increased and more parents and children will take advantage of opportunities for learning.

### 05: Cost Guide

Project budget guide (based on pilot programme of 20 families per annum including equipment, utilities, training, event costs, community supports and family activities): £200,000 per annum.

Can be scaled up.

Cost per annum equates to one residential care placement.




## About The Fostering Network

As the UK's leading fostering charity and membership organisation, we are the essential network for fostering and we bring together everyone who is involved in the lives of children in foster care. We support foster carers to transform children's lives and we work with fostering services and the wider sector to develop and share best practice.

We work to ensure all fostered children and young people experience stable family life and we are passionate about the difference foster care makes. We champion fostering and seek to create vital change so that foster care is the very best it can be.

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