



MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

2022 - 2023



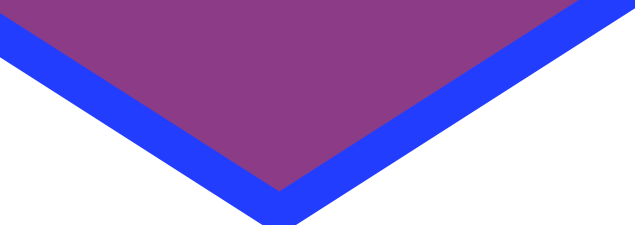
Introduction

Enfield Council's foster carers provide stability, care and family support to children and young people who are not able to live with their birth family. This is often a temporary arrangement whilst work is done to return the children to their families but can also be a long-term arrangement by order of the court or as approved by the agency decision maker. Our pool of foster carers will be the looked after child's alternative family for as long as that care is needed. With the help and support of their family and friends in their support network, they can make a positive difference to the children in their care and prepare them for the future.

We need to ensure that there are enough carers available to support the number of Children Looked After (CLA) who require care in Enfield. As of April 2022, there are 387 CLA by the council. There will be some sibling groups matched to foster carers able to care for siblings. Despite an increase in the number of carers over the last year, there are still more CLA, an increase of 27%. As a result, there is a shortfall of foster carers in the council, meaning that not all placements can be filled inhouse. This shortfall can increase further as some carers stop fostering due to deregistration, retirement and other circumstances.

Enfield is a diverse London borough. The children needing placements come from a range of racial, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds. Our strategy will therefore be informed by the demographic makeup of CLA children as we aim to engage with potential carers of a similar background to the children requiring placements. This will include targeting people within specific ethnic and religious groups that are currently underrepresented within our current pool of foster carers.

We will also be targeting groups that are traditionally more likely to foster. This could include those within the LGBT community looking to care for children, single people and couples who work with children, as well as those whose own children have grown up and left home.



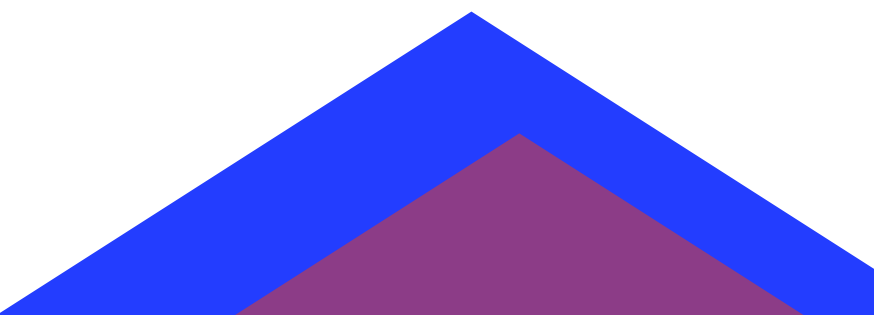
Foster carers need to live in, or within reasonable travelling distance to the borough for numerous reasons. Children need to remain close to their family, friends and community networks and to existing resources such as schools, doctor surgeries etc. However, we also acknowledge that it is not always appropriate or possible to place looked after children in the borough with local foster carers. Some promotional activities may stretch outside the boundary of Enfield to areas such as neighbouring London Boroughs (Haringey, Camden, Islington etc.). We will maintain links with neighbouring authorities, both generally and through our partner agency the North London Fostering Consortium, in recognition of Enfield's needs.

Recruiting foster carers requires ongoing, year-round campaigns on multiple platforms. There will be a focus at certain periods of the year (e.g. Christmas, back to school, Foster Care Fortnight) where there is a general increase in awareness for fostering. We will therefore look to exploit this organic increase in interest and ensure that any potential carers relevant for Enfield Council come to us as the fostering agency of choice.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had numerous ramifications for foster carer recruitment. However we are getting back to face-face events, information sessions and offline marketing. We will continue to have a focus on digital platforms, such as Eventbrite, Facebook and Google Ads, due to the increased performance we have seen over this period.

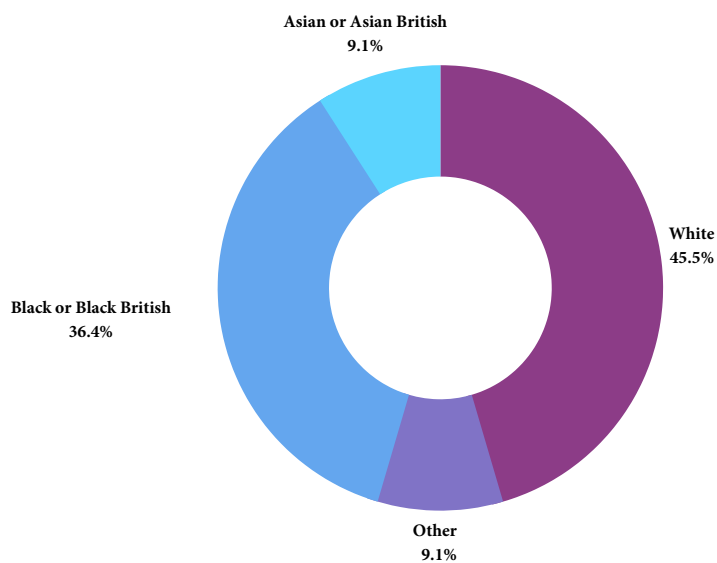
This strategy will span over the financial year 2022-2023 and outlines the strategies and campaigns that will be employed throughout this period to recruit and retain a pool of foster carers to support the London Borough of Enfield. There were 17 approvals in the previous financial year. While our marketing budget has been cut from £20,000 to £10,000, our target for unconnected foster carer recruitment for 2022/23 is 18 approvals.

Enfield Council will also make efforts to raise awareness to families who may be in a private fostering situation to declare this arrangement to us so that we can advise and support them to look after the children in their care.

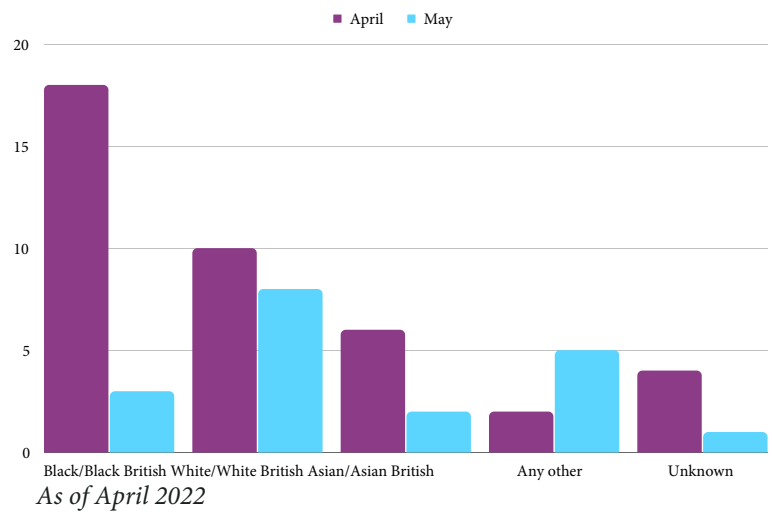


Analysis of looked after children and foster carer population

Children Looked After (CLA) with episode of care



Enquiries by ethnic groups



45.5% of all children looked after are from a White ethnicity. Black or Black British children make up the next largest group (36.4%) while Asian or British Asian were the third (9%). The rest of the CLA are made of children from other nationalities as well as those of mixed nationalities.

The majority of all confirmed enquiries came from people of a Black British, Caribbean or African ethnic group. This is positive as many CLA come from this group. The next highest number of enquiries came from those of a White, White British or White European background. This shows that more can be done to target these individuals within the community as they are the largest ethnic group within Enfield and half of the CLA fall into this ethnic group.

Within each category of looked after children, there are also specific ethnic groups with their own unique cultures and backgrounds to consider. One such group is Albanian; we have made a concerted effort to target members of this community by advertising in Albanian language papers and social media pages. We will continue to analyse the data of CLA and target groups as specifically as possible to ensure the makeup of our foster carers mirrors that of the CLA more closely.

Foster Carer Motivations

Recruitment and retention of foster carers is a challenge for all local authorities in the United Kingdom. Neighbouring local authorities will often compete with each other for the same pool of people which is more prevalent amongst the smaller geographical authorities in the London region.

There will also be competition from independent fostering agencies that work both regionally and nationally and who can, in some cases, offer a more attractive support/finance package. They also have an increased marketing budget, allowing greater exposure, particularly on digital platforms such as Facebook and Google where CPC (cost per click) bidding methods mean the more you spend the more traffic you receive.

Comprehensive training and development are cited as a key reason for choosing a local authority over an IFA. These sessions offer carers the chance to develop their skills and gain appreciation of how fostering can affect everyone concerned.

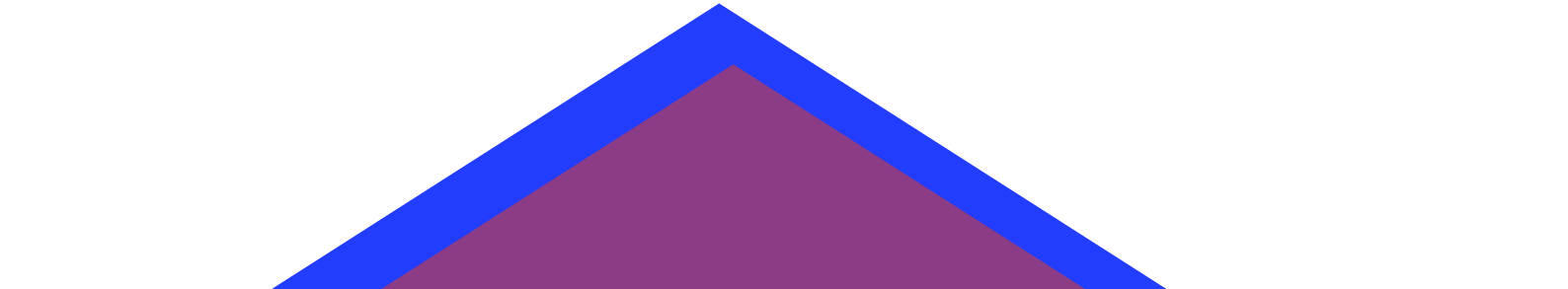
We will also emphasise that we provide out of hours contact with our social work team for advice, guidance and support and a 24-hour helpline. This package of support will appeal to the foster carers who above all want to see a child develop and flourish in their care.



Looking into the motivation of approved carers, their reasons include:

- Wanting to make a difference
- Having a spare bedroom to offer
- Looking for a new career path
Enjoying caring for children personally/ professionally
- Knowing someone who has experience in fostering
- Awareness of need for foster carers from reading or verbal communications
- Suits current family circumstances with options to create/extend family
- Own children have grown or moved away
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Using the information we have on our existing foster carers, such as age, location and ethnicity, we can start to create a profile of who we can target as prospective foster carers and what individual motivations we may wish to appeal to.



Key messages

These are some of the messages we will be using in our adverts based on the findings above about the motivations of carers and the current misconceptions around fostering:

Raising awareness of fostering in general:

- Fostering can make a positive and lasting difference to a child's life
- Fostering can benefit the community as children brought up in a stable home are more likely to thrive in the future
- Fostering gives children a loving, stable and secure family home
- We need a diverse range of carers to cater for the diverse range of children in need of foster care
- Fostering offers many avenues for personal and family development that will benefit you later in life
- Fostering can be tough, but the good days are extremely rewarding and don't just put a smile on a child's face, but yours as well!
- Private fostering support is available so tell us about your foster caring arrangement

Promoting the rewarding aspect of fostering and its long-term impact

- Make a difference today and help children in need achieve their full potential in life
- There will be hard days as a foster carer, but putting in the work today will give you and the child huge rewards in the future
- The most rewarding thing about fostering is being involved in changing a child's life for good, taking them out of a traumatic situation into a positive one
- Help children and young people in our community and start your rewarding career as an Enfield Foster Carer

Promoting the inclusive nature of fostering:

- No matter what your background, you could make a brilliant foster carer.
- We need a diverse range of foster carers to care for a diverse range of children with individual needs.
- If you're over 21, love working with children and want the satisfaction of making a difference, fostering is for you.
- Applications are welcomed from single applicants as well as couples and there is no discrimination on grounds of class, race, culture, or sexuality.
- Fostered children can settle quicker in a family that matches their racial, religious, and cultural background

What Enfield Council can provide:

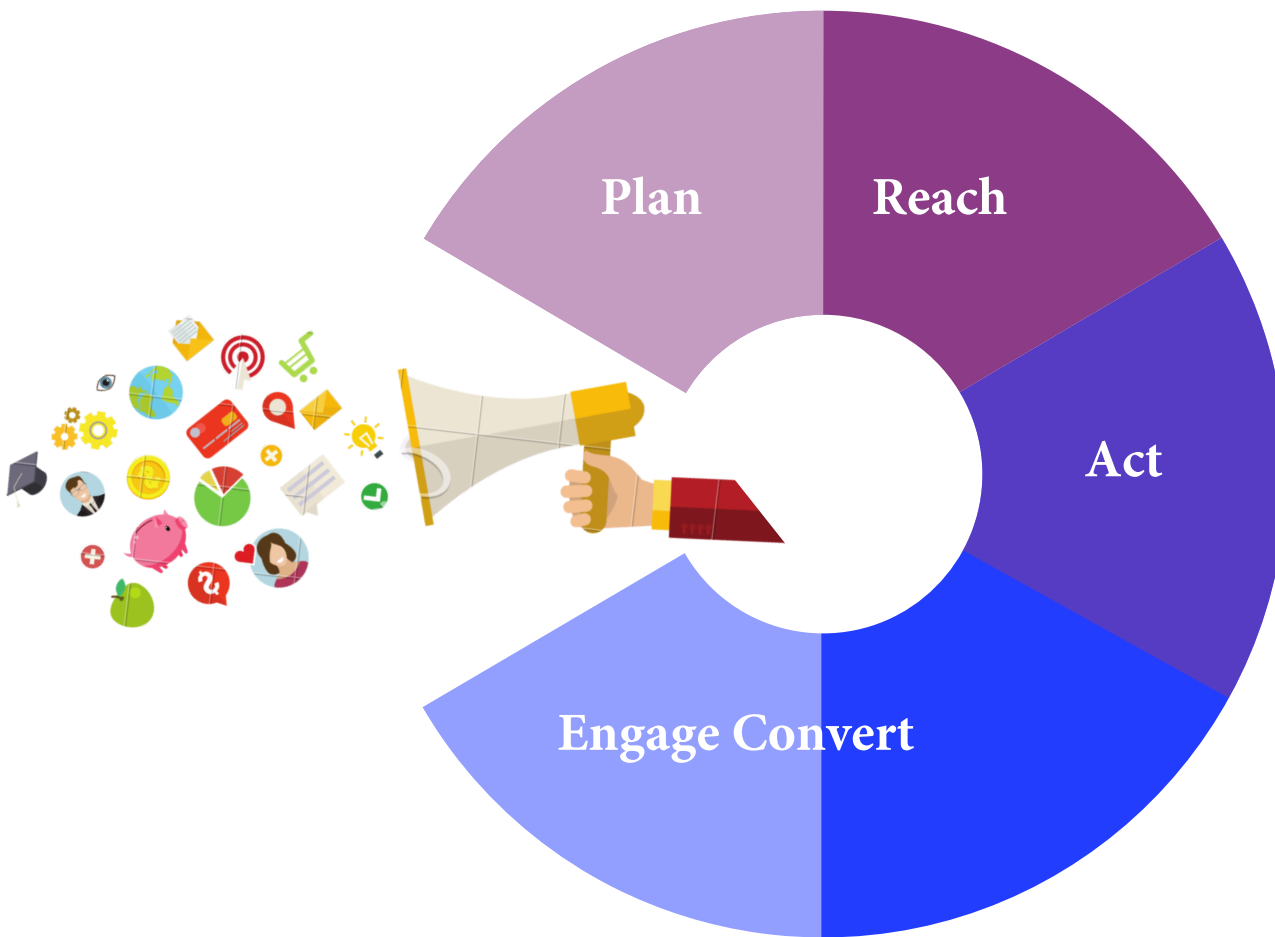
- Enfield Council's Fostering Service is committed to recruiting more foster carers to meet the needs of looked after children requiring a foster placement
- Everyone interested in becoming a foster carer will be welcomed without prejudice and will be given clear written information about the preparation, assessment and approval procedure
- Enfield Council's Fostering Service offer help, encouragement, support and guidance in assisting prospective foster carers in every aspect of the application process
- All applicants will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the fostering process

Marketing and Communications strategy

From the 1st of April 2021 to the 31st of March 2022, we received 236 enquiries. A large percentage of these were from family and friends of current foster carers, therefore a core part of this year's communications will be encouraging foster carers to keep referring potential candidates to us. There has also been an increase in the number of enquiries through social media platforms and Enfield's website. We will therefore be looking to expand the use of online advertising through sources such as Google Ads, Facebook and other social media platforms.

As a result of a reduced marketing budget and the performance campaigns over the last year, we will be focusing most of our efforts on more continuous streams of advertising. We will aim to constantly raise awareness of fostering rather than putting most of our resource into one off campaigns. This is because there is a greater risk of not generating leads from standalone marketing efforts that only have a limited window where they can be effective, thus reducing return on income. However, we will still look to partake in bigger marketing campaigns in times of heightened fostering awareness such as Fostering Fortnight, back to school period and Christmas.

We will also ensure that we are engaging with potential carers who may not have ever considered fostering. We can do this by following what is known as the 'RACE' framework as shown by the funnel below. We are currently very strong at converting 'hot' leads during the convert and engage stage (as shown by high number of family and friends enquiries). However, we can be doing more to engage with candidates at the top of the funnel and make sure they are pushed to act and submit an enquiry.



Plan – This strategy document. We will be aiming to increase the number of people attending information sessions and capturing initial details of candidates just finding out more information.

Reach – This will be a mix of both - continuous digital marketing efforts on PPC platforms and social media, as well as long term adverts throughout Enfield that try to engage with members of the public and raise awareness of fostering. This could include billboard/poster ads or long-term print advertising such as patient and education booklets. With any information captured, make sure that these ‘cold’ leads are kept in touch with via email marketing.

Act – Once people are aware of fostering, we then want the best enquirers to go on to make an initial enquiry. While they may do this directly via an advert, this can also be achieved by encouraging people to sign up to information events on the website or getting in touch with our team for more info.

Convert – Getting the initial enquiry/application forms submitted. This means we are quick to follow up from information sessions/events and informal enquiries through the website/phone.

Engage – Utilising our foster carers for recruitment activities such as events, online content etc. Encouraging family and friends fostering so they advocate becoming a foster carer with Enfield Council.

Action Plan 2022-2023

We will be running campaigns and undertaking marketing activities throughout the financial year aimed at covering all aspects of the 'RACE' framework identified in the previous section. The overall goal is to maintain a high profile for Enfield's Fostering Service and increase the number of prospective foster carers moving through the recruitment process.

Action	RACE	Timescale	Who by	Output	Evaluation
Compile a recruitment calendar listing the key activities and important dates to note in each month to instruct the year's marketing and advertising campaigns	Plan	September 2022	Recruitment and Marketing Officer (RMO)	Calendar for staff to alert them of key dates and opportunities we are utilising to promote fostering. Programme of events and promotional work around the key dates identified	To be included within RMO's strategy plan
Work with foster carers to identify referrals from their friends and family networks	Engage	Ongoing	Recruitment team and SSW	Learn from successful schemes already carried out by other local authorities such as the STAR (Start Thinking About Recruitment) parties	Monitored and recorded by recruitment team (Duty sheet)
Planning public events	Reach	Ongoing throughout the year	RMO	To raise the awareness of fostering and obtain expressions of interest for immediate follow up	Monitored and recorded by recruitment team (Duty sheet)

Action	RACE	Timescale	Who by	Output	Evaluation
To increase relevant traffic going to the fostering website through PPC advertising, SEO improvement and increased visibility on corporate Enfield platforms	Act/Convert	Ongoing	RMO and DS team	SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) content to be updated regularly. Rolling PPC Improvement of user experience on site.	Web enquiry numbers recorded as source of enquiry.
Local press advertising - mainly based within specific community papers in Enfield	Reach	Ongoing	RMO	Selecting existing publications and any new recommended ones as they come onboard throughout the year and during key times as indicated by the campaigns.	Expressions of interest monitored and collated by marketing officer in the quarterly statistics report. Also monitor website traffic when specific campaigns go live.
NHS advertising within specific practices and publications	Reach/Act	Ongoing from previous year	RMO	Adverts within patient booklets to advertise monthly information sessions (2-year deal agreed with Ordnance Unity Centre). Events in NHS venues tbc.	Signups to information sessions to be monitored (Duty sheet)
Outdoor advertising on school gates	Reach	From May 2022 ongoing TBC	RMO	Raising awareness of fostering for Enfield and any upcoming events.	Source of enquiry monitored and collated by recruitment and marketing officer in the quarterly statistics report

Action	RACE	Timescale	Who by	Output	Evaluation
Increase social media presence (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) with content and paid ads	Reach/Act	Ongoing	RMO	Regular update to social media pages to ensure content is up to date and of interest. Engage with relevant topics such as major news or events. Post interactive content such as videos, blogs etc.	Social media insights, analytics, traffic reports and enquiries generated
Outreach events to staff at the Civic Centre and other internal comms	Reach/Act	Ongoing	RMO	Work with the Culture Change team and marketing comms team to make staff aware of the Council's fostering need and any events are circulated in forums such as Staff Matters, Intranet etc.	Monitored on duty sheet
Fostering Recruitment Materials and literature	Reach	Ongoing	RMO	Items used for recruiting foster carers –brochures, banners, t-shirts and other promotional items. These can be used at events or distributed amongst the community	Consistency with existing materials and choice of value for money items. We will also review all collateral to ensure it is up to date. Can track success of each item based on duty sheet.
Press Office and media	Reach	Focusing on key dates (May, September, December)	Marketing officer / Press team	Raising awareness	Press coverage and enquiries received as results

Action	RACE	Timescale	Who by	Output	Evaluation
Private Fostering Awareness activities	Act	Ongoing	RMO & Social worker for private foster carers	Outreach activities to communities we understand as more likely to be engaging in private fostering arrangements	Number of enquiries and monitoring any trends that identify which communities are engaging in private fostering arrangements to inform future campaigns
Email bulletins to prospective carers who agree to be contacted by email communications	Reach	Monthly	RMO	Reminders of upcoming information sessions and events	E-marketing site insight
Foster Care Fortnight	Reach/Act	May 2022	RMO	Promotional activities to raise awareness of fostering in Enfield	Web and social media insights and enquiries directly associated with the activity during this period
School Newsletters and events	Reach	Ongoing	RMO	To promote Enfield Fostering	Results to be evaluated on Duty sheet

Evaluating communications/ recruitment activities

We will always look to see which paid campaigns have led to the best performance in terms of approved foster carers. While the source of enquiry is captured on the Initial Enquiry form, most enquiries involve multiple sources (e.g. see poster on street, Google fostering, click on Google Ad, go to website to find more information, sign up to event on Eventbrite, initial enquiry). We will therefore aim to ensure that relevant marketing activities are being undertaken at each stage of the RACE tunnel, so our exposure is high and candidates are being pushed to submit an enquiry.

Word of mouth referrals remain an effective way of recruiting new carers. Enfield continues to offer an excellent financial incentive to existing foster carers for referrals from their friends and families network.

One major change this year would be that more events and information sessions will move back to face to face interactions as we have found this to be most effective in engaging with applicants.

We will undertake the following evaluation methods to assess and analyse the success of our activities:

- Enquiry numbers and monitoring demographic data especially in relation to our target audiences
- Web analytics to monitor website usage and social media influence.
- Evaluation forms after attending information sessions
- Media monitoring by press office and web team as appropriate
- Profile of event attendees to measure if we are reaching out to identified target groups
- Anecdotal feedback from staff and partners
- Feedback from prospective carers who are not pursuing fostering to find out why
- Statistics monitoring the number and sources of enquiries every 3 months
- Monitoring the progress of the current pool of prospective carers and sharing every 3 months the statistics and reasons for any drop outs in that period with the team

The fostering allowance is also in review currently as it is looking to be increased. Once increased, this will attract more applicants to Enfield Council.

Invest To Save (Recruitment & Retention)

A digital marketing budget averages around £20,000, according to Shima Taylor, Marketing Manager. Our current budget for year 2022-2023 is £10,000. Please see below on ideas for invest to save with marketing.

- 'Golden Hello' - Financial incentive to move from IFA to Enfield Council. A lot of foster carers are put off to transfer due to the long application process. However, with financial incentive this would make it more attractive to them. £500 upon approval at fostering panel and a further £500 upon first placement.
- Staff members' referral fee of £500 upon approval and taking their first placement.
- Local community radio stations that we can advertise on. This can vary in pricing depending on the station. From previous research we have found this to start from £5,000. This can be a one-off basis to view results and outcomes due to high pricing.

Council Tax Reductions (other councils are offering discounted prices) This could be discounted at 50%.

- Buses and billboards - Buses can vary depending on the bus routes and duration of the add (from previous searches we have found £4,000 for 4 weeks. Billboards - we can advertise on digital advert boards on the road (these may be pricy, around £5000).

Energy allowance - This is to be implemented to existing foster carers to save money on energy bill with each placement that they have. This will draw in more foster carers to Enfield with the current economic crisis and the rise of electricity bills.

- Ambassadors - our foster carers have voices and we actively listen to them and value their input. Our carers work closely with us to inform our recruitment strategy and have come up with some very creative ideas. It is important that we include them in recruitment activities such as events, information sessions and Skills to Foster. We want our foster carers to help and support by mentoring fostering applicants in need of support or newly approved foster carers. We can pay foster carers for their time in doing this.

Considering fostering?

Our friendly team are ready to guide you every step of the way!



☎ Telephone: 020 8379 2831

☎ Freephone: 0800 038 1313

✉ fostering@enfield.gov.uk

🌐 www.enfield.gov.uk/fostering

📘 Fostering in Enfield

🐦 @FosteringEnfield