



Orchard
fostering 
Building brighter futures



Make a difference.
Find out about
fostering.



Why foster with us?

Established in 2008, we are the largest Irish-owned independent foster care agency.

More than a decade later, we have close to a hundred wonderful foster carer families that provide excellent care for their foster children.

Our mission is our dedication and genuine passion for child welfare and supporting carers. We pride ourselves on knowing our carers and recognising the contribution they make towards a lasting difference in the lives of the children in their care.

We have a multi-disciplinary team of over 30 staff. Fully qualified and locally-based, our social work, social care and therapy teams are available to support our carers and ultimately to achieve the best outcomes for the foster children in their care.

Importantly our dedicated and experienced staff are available through our out of hours call service, giving our carers the peace of mind that they can access support at any time should the need arise.

We've been building brighter futures for children and young people for over a decade.



Types of foster care

Our foster carers provide the following types of placement depending on the needs of the child or young person:

Emergency

These foster placements tend to come at short notice when a child needs somewhere else to stay immediately due to it being unsafe for them to remain where they are.

Short-term fostering

Sometimes short-term care is required as an interim measure for children for a period of a few weeks or months while difficulties at home are being resolved or other arrangements are being made for their future.

Long-term fostering

Often the best solution for foster children is to remain with their foster families for several years or until they are ready to take care of themselves and live independently.

Supported lodgings

This is where carers offer young people aged 16 and over the opportunity to live independently whilst receiving practical and emotional support.

Respite

This offers a short stay to a child or young person in order to give their longer-term carer a break.

Talk to us and find out more.



What we offer our carers

Step-by-step, we're here to support you.

Quick and easy access

We pride ourselves in being responsive to all enquiries at any time of the day.

Support

All our carers have their own social worker who visits regularly and is available on the phone between visits.

Our out of hours and duty call service means that carers can access support and advice if a challenging situation arises - 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

We are the only agency with a dedicated assessment team, which means the assessment and training to become a foster carer is usually completed within four months (more quickly than other agencies).

Our multi-disciplinary team offer additional support and therapies to help our carers and to enable their foster children to achieve the best outcomes.

Learning and development

We provide regular training, support groups and extensive social care support for our carers, keeping them up to date with issues and concerns surrounding children and young people whilst learning new skills and preparing them for challenges they may face.

Allowance

Foster allowances for all foster carers are set by the Minister for Children. The allowance is intended to cover everyday living costs including food, clothing, travel, household bills etc.

Community

We like having fun with our foster families! Across the year we host a range of activities from Tayto Park to Christmas parties to have a good time and enable our carers and their foster children to get to know each other and benefit from mutual support.

Social

Our carers can follow us on our social media accounts and find out more about our events.

Join our expanding community





Michelle's story

My name is Michelle. I am a foster carer to two female siblings, one aged nine and one aged four. I foster with my husband and three children, the youngest now is 13 years old.

Since we began fostering we have had these two little girls in our care. They came to us whilst in emergency care. We met them in their emergency placement and they then moved in with us a few weeks later. Both have very different characters.

The nine-year-old is a lovely really happy-go-lucky and very resilient child. She had a challenging relationship with her birth mother and so initially we had to show her a different way of growing up and being parented. Initially she did resist against this but it is showing its rewards at this stage.

The other little girl has a lot of medical problems. In the beginning there were a lot of medical appointments and learning to understand her syndrome. We had to work with various consultants, psychologists and social workers involved in her life.

She came to us just barely three and to see how much she has come on since then is amazing.

We were under the impression she would always be a child who would be vulnerable and may not reach her milestones that a normal four-year-old might meet.

She has actually surpassed herself! She has no learning difficulties and to see how well she has come on and how happy she is by being given a secure family background... it breaks your heart to just see how happy she is in her own little world and how well she is doing.

To see our foster children having similar days that my own children would have had and the joy they get out of it is the reward. It's the little things like that – they're not treated any differently than my own children. They're getting the same love, care and opportunities and hobbies that they want to try out and do; they just love it. We're delighted that they may remain in our care long term.

One challenge that was greater than I thought was my own children adapting to fostering. Although I left fostering until they were a bit older, there is an impact for your own children, but it depends on their personalities.

My eldest who is 20 must now accommodate two other younger children that she never had to think about before. But to see her caring for them is really good. They make such an impact too. It's their journey as well but they're happy to foster these two children. To even see my son give up the role of being the youngest in the family happily, because he wants these two children to be a part of this family, is lovely to see.

These two girls may be remaining with us until they are 18 years old. We're delighted! They're just such a part of our lives and are like two of our own children.



Could you join our team?

Fostering

To qualify for fostering you can be single, cohabiting or married and you may be a homeowner or a tenant. We welcome applications from all ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

Our carers come from all types of backgrounds but what they share is a caring and nurturing attitude and a desire to help vulnerable children through life's ups and downs.

You will also need to be over the age of 25, have a spare bedroom and be able to commit your time to fostering.

Whether fostering has just crossed your mind, or you see it as your life's ambition, we'd like to help you on your fostering journey. Right now, hundreds of children and young people are in need of a safe, stable and supportive environment.

In return you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are making a positive difference to children who need stability in their lives.

Could you join our team?

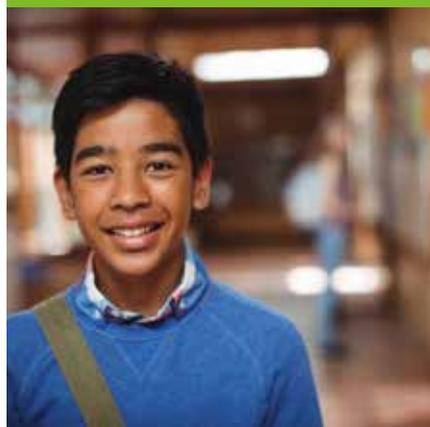
Supported Lodgings

The requirements to be a supported lodgings carer are similar but are a little more flexible as the role is to care for young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who have a greater level of independence. These young people are referred from a range of backgrounds, including those arriving to Ireland as asylum seekers.

The primary role of the supported lodgings carer is to assist the young person's transition into adulthood and to support them to learn practical life skills.

A supported lodgings carer needs to provide a spare bedroom and access to household facilities such as washing and cooking to the young person.

Supported lodgings carers do not need to be as available as a foster carer and therefore have greater flexibility in relation to their own work arrangements.



Ahmed's story

My name is Ahmed. I am 24 years old and I am from Niger in Africa.

Growing up I didn't know my mother, she and my sister passed away during childbirth. I was about seven years old then when I lost my father; after this I lived with my uncle.

We worked together for a man for many years. My uncle too later passed away when I was around 12 years old. I was getting abused in Niger by those around me. I was sleeping in the shop in which I worked. Life was tough and there were problems.

One day I told the man I worked for I wanted to go to Libya. He agreed to help me. This man was like a father figure to me as I had no one. He got in touch with some people and brought me to one African country; I didn't know which one. I didn't go to Libya as there was an uprising and this man advised against it. From this other country contact was made with another person who then brought me to Ireland. I didn't know who these people were. It was when I arrived that I applied for asylum. I was 17 years old.

When I moved into my foster carer's house it was excellent straight away. I stayed with my foster family for two years before moving on. My foster mother has been a pillar to me, supporting me throughout my time here and even to date. She is like my mother. Even now, she applies for jobs for me and encourages me to go for interviews.

I live elsewhere but speak weekly and have overnight visits often with her. If I don't ring her, she will ring me asking how I am. Where I'm coming from being alone, when I look back on my time with her, that is what motivates me to keep going, it was a great experience. Almost all the young people that have been with my foster carer always describe her like a mother.

I live with other people renting and work as a security guard in DCU for the past year. My strength probably came from having nothing to lose. When you have no one... no family, brother or sisters, I thought what else have I to lose?

The minute I was asked to share my story by my foster mother, I said I'd do it straight away. If it's for Orchard Fostering, I'd do something every day for them as they helped my foster carer who helped me.

I was always told by my foster mother that they were supporting us. I know the challenges that they (young people in foster care) still face to date. They don't have anybody. If there's anything I ever need, my foster carer still helps me.

Fostering is very, very important. Most of the young kids don't see the bigger picture outside this. I told the kids don't rush yourself... look where I have everything.

I have a job, a house and a say. But I still come to my foster carer and she still helps. I know if I need support, she is still there for me.

Your fostering journey

The application process usually takes in the region of four months and involves a detailed look at you and your life. Your Assessing Social Worker will support you all the way. Here's our guide to the steps involved.

1. Enquiry

You can call us on 01 627 5713 or fill out the enquiry form on our website. We will talk to you about fostering and answer any questions to help you decide whether fostering might be right for you.

2. Home visit

One of our assessment social workers will visit your home to answer any further questions and to explain how fostering with Orchard Fostering will work. S/he will ask you some questions about your family, lifestyle and childcare experience to assess your suitability to foster.

3. Fostering assessment

Your Assessing Social Worker will contact you and visit you and your home a number of times in order to get to know you, your family and the skills and experience you have for fostering.

3a. Checks

The following checks will be carried out as part of the assessment:

Health check

A medical examination completed by your GP.

Garda check

Garda vetting is completed on all adults including their own children aged over 16 years.

HSE/ Tusla and other social security checks

Safety checks

A safety compliance check on your home.

3b. References

The following references will also be required:

- If you are in employment, a reference is required from your employer
- Written and verbal reference from three people who support your suitability as a foster carer who aren't related to you
- An ex-partner reference where applicable

4. Preparation training

You will be required to attend preparation training run over 2.5 days Friday-Sunday. The training is intended to give you a full understanding of fostering and to explore a number of topics in detail.

5. Foster care committee

When the assessment and all relevant checks have been completed your assessment report is presented to a committee which is made up of Tusla staff, foster carers and care leavers.

The role of the multidisciplinary committee is to confirm the recommendations made by your Assessing Social Worker in relation to the number of children and their ages that would be best for you and your family. You will be informed in writing of the committee's decision

In some rare cases the foster care committee may decide that fostering is not the right option for some people. In these cases, the Assessing Social Worker will guide the applicant through the appeals process should they wish to appeal the decision

6. Final steps to fostering

After you are approved by the foster care committee you will be allocated a Link Support Social Worker; you will also receive a foster care handbook and you will need to sign a written agreement which sets out your responsibilities as a foster carer and our duties to support you.

After that we make an immediate start to match a child to your skills, circumstances and abilities – and that's when the journey really begins! Remember though we'll be there to guide and support you every step along the way.

Join us and help to build brighter futures for foster children and young people



www.orchardfostering.ie

info@orchardfostering.ie

01 627 5713

2nd Floor, Block 14

Park West Business Park

Nangor Road

Dublin D12 F9X8

The Orchard Fostering name, wordmark and the hand device are trademarks pending registration. "Building brighter futures" is a service mark pending registration.

All images are stock photography, and are posed by models.