

Why Choose FCA



0800 023 4561
www.thefca.co.uk



Allowances and Rewards

We recognise the value of our fostering families to our community and want to ensure you are always rewarded for your loyalty with us. Along with a generous fostering allowance, we award two bonus payments of £250 each year in the summer and winter, along with an appreciation bonus of up to £1,000 depending on length of service with us. Not just that, but you'll also receive gifts for each milestone you hit, along with our annual appreciation day with events and days out local to you.

We also provide all our foster parents with access to our rewards platform where you can take advantage of fantastic discounts across hundreds of high street names, online stores and supermarkets.

We Invest More to Improve the Lives of Children

We are more than simply the allowance we give to our foster parents. We ensure we invest back into the services we offer to ensure the very best experiences and outcomes for the young people in our care. Whether that be fun local events, career fairs and workshops, or our biggest event of all: 'The Big Sing Off' choir competition which involves all of the regions throughout FCA. Not forgetting our dedicated Participation Team who actively engage with our children and young people to ensure their voices are heard and responded to.

We Are One of The Most Established Independent Fostering Agencies

Being one of the most reputable agencies mean we are a trusted partner for local authorities throughout the UK. Our services are in high demand across the country, which means once you become an approved foster family with us, it won't be long before you'll be making a difference in a child's life. At FCA we are one big family. Our regional teams and offices up and down the country mean you'll have local support, events and services tailored to you.

Professional Support

Our Out of Hours Support is there for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. When you join us, you'll be joining our community with access to one of the greatest fostering support packages out there. You'll have access to:

- A dedicated supervising social worker
- A referrals teams that concentrate on making quality matches
- Therapists who work with foster parents and staff so that we help our foster parents care therapeutically
- Dedicated out of hours staff that know how to support you if something goes wrong

First-Class Training and Development

Our training programme is second to none. All our foster parents complete a detailed preparation programme that will equip you with all the skills and knowledge you need to be a successful foster parent. You'll also have access to a wealth of complimentary training courses that will continually develop your skills – all of which are tailored to you and your personal development. All our courses are flexible and designed to work around your schedule, with opportunities to learn both online and face-to-face.

Excellent Ofsted Ratings

We know what it takes to reach the pinnacle of success in regards to delivering a fostering service, and as such all our registrations are rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. We have achieved this by listening to our staff, foster families and children. If you want to join an organisation that takes pride in striving for Outstanding, then please choose FCA.

Safe and Happy

At FCA we cherish the fact that children have one childhood and we are very proud of our 'Safe and Happy' mantra – a pledge which is now embedded within the culture of FCA and enables us to build a service that is centred around children and young people feeling safe and happy whilst with us.

Carer Buddy

We will allocate you a foster parent buddy so you and your family will benefit from support and guidance from someone who's already been in your shoes. Their own first-hand experience of the fostering journey means they can provide empathic, insightful advice to guide you through the process smoothly.

Why Choose FCA Thames Valley

Supporting our Foster Parents

Ofsted Rated Outstanding

When you join FCA Thames Valley you will be joining an experienced, diverse and knowledgeable fostering provider awarded with the highest independent benchmark of quality. We are an exceptional agency and we have the accreditations to prove it. We have an Ofsted rating of 'Outstanding,' which is testament to our team's dedication to going above and beyond to improve outcomes for the children and young people in our care.

Diversity

When it comes to choosing foster parents, factors like your age, gender, sexuality, marital status, faith or ethnicity are not taken into account. What matters to us is your dedication to transforming the lives of vulnerable children and making a difference.

Our foster parents come from all backgrounds and a range of ages. Between them, our current team of dedicated foster parents have over 475 combined years of experience. We have single foster parents who can offer siblings a home, couples with birth children who support sanctuary-seeking young people, and retired couples supporting teenagers to independence. We recognise the diversity of our families and offer support to all members of the fostering household and support network. This includes birth children, grandparents, friends or extended family.

Expert Matching and Placement Stability

Our dedicated referrals team work alongside 26 Local Authorities throughout the region to offer a wide range of fostering opportunities. We have an excellent track record for quality matching, ensuring your family and the child in your care will have a successful and happy fostering experience together. Over a quarter of our young people are linked long-term to their foster parents, and this figure continues to rise, providing more children with safe and secure homes until they reach adulthood and independence.

Participation

We have a strong focus on participation at FCA, where we truly value the opinions of our children and young people and involve them in decision-making. Listening to our children and young people is how we strive to always improve. Our innovative and proactive Participation Team ensure that every child has their voice heard and has plenty of opportunities to gain new experiences, learn new skills and have fun.



Free Events and Activities

Your entire family is welcome to join us for our regular free fun events and days out throughout the year. These events are fantastic opportunities for you, your family members and the children in your care to make new friends, build relationships and enjoy a fantastic day out together. We also acknowledge and celebrate all our children's and foster parent's achievements in true FCA style, making sure every member of your fostering family knows just how appreciated and valued they are. Our activities and awards include:

- Our annual regional Fun Day
- A foster family appreciation day every year
- Christmas lunch for foster parents
- Long service celebrations for staff and foster parents
- Yearly achievements awards for children and young people
- Activities for children and young people including arts and crafts, trampolining, theme park visits and more
- Time to Shine, where we recognise special achievements of foster parents and staff monthly

Supporting our Children and Young People...

English as an Additional Language

We provide all of our important information and guides in a wide range of languages for children and young people whose native language is not English. We also have factsheets translated into many different languages to explain to young people who are new to England what fostering is, and what they can expect while living with a foster family. If a document is not yet available in the child's native language, we will take steps to get it translated for them. We are able to provide translators for children to ensure that they are able to actively participate and understand the decisions being made about their care during meetings. We will also make efforts to use translation services to ensure that our young person's monthly newsletter is available in each child's chosen language.

Communication Tools for Children with Additional Needs

Here at Thames Valley we use a program called Widgit to make communication accessible for any children in our care who have communication difficulties, such as for those who are non-verbal or who struggle with reading. Widgit is a fantastic system which uses symbols and images to help young people to communicate without having to use words.

We currently use Widgit for important documents such as complaints forms and our monthly newsletter. We also offer the use of Widgit to our foster parents who care for young people with additional communication needs, allowing our foster carers to create simple and accessible communication tools like picture cards or visual timetables to aid in day-to-day family life.

SEN Sessions

Our SEN sessions, held around four times a year in Thames Valley, provide valuable opportunities for children with special educational needs to engage in tailored activities that suit their individual needs. These sessions range from sensory-based experiences, designed to provide a calming and stimulating environment, to outdoor adventures that encourage exploration, confidence-building, and social interaction. SEN sessions are crucial as they offer a safe, inclusive space where children can learn, play, and develop at their own pace, free from judgment. They also provide fostering families with a supportive community, helping them connect with others who understand their journey.

AQA Qualification Awards Scheme

FCA Thames Valley is a registered AQA Unit Award Scheme Centre. This means that all of our children and young people, of all ages and abilities, are encouraged to take part in a range of AQA UAS units which will enable them to gain recognised certificates from AQA. These units can be achieved either through group workshops or independent achievements.

Some examples of topics young people can gain AQA certificates in are Diversity and Inclusion, Food Hygiene, Money and Budgeting, Volunteering, and Hair and Beauty. AQA training is a great way to support young people's confidence, self-esteem and to prepare them for adulthood.

Personal Development

We create a Personal Development Plan alongside a Learning and Development Strategy for all our children and young people to ensure that their individual needs are met.



