

**BROCHURE
FOR
PROSPECTIVE
CARERS,
RESPITE CARERS
&
SESSIONAL CARERS**

An Independent Foster Care Agency
that is:

*SMALL ENOUGH TO CARE
LARGE ENOUGH TO EXCEL!*

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INTRODUCTION

NEWFOCAS Ltd is an Independent Foster Care Agency which does not operate to make a profit, established in 2000 by Helen Taubman, in conjunction with a wide range highly skilled and experienced professionals and Carers. A past Carer and a qualified social worker, practicing since 1971, Helen has a wealth of local authority experience, the latter nine years of which were spent managing and developing fostering, adoption, family support and youth justice services.

NEWFOCAS Ltd was established with the primary aim of offering good quality support of whatever intensity and type necessary to assist Carers to look after children and young people with challenging behaviours and complex needs. Carers work in small 'family groups' and work closely with each other, and field social work staff, to ensure that the children and young people we care for have the best possible care.

NEWFOCAS Ltd welcomes your interest in joining us. We work as a highly successful team, using an innovative, 'family network' model, which in practice means that children and young people who are placed with us, gain, for a short while, a temporary 'family' group, where other Carers become like aunts and uncles; likewise, respite Carers, who are also a nice safe place to go for a break. Sessional Carers, who work with the children and young people on specific plans and tasks, become trusted and helpful, friends.

NEWFOCAS Ltd is a very happy team in which to work. We attach great importance to all our workers and Carers, whatever part they have to play. Carers are valued and respected colleagues who play an integral and very important part in the team working.

WHERE ARE WE BASED AND HOW DO WE SUPPORT OUR CARERS?

NEWFOCAS Ltd operates in the North East Wales area. Its headquarters are in Buckley, Flintshire. We are happy to accept enquiries from anyone within a reasonable travelling radius from here. Carers need to attend weekly team meetings.

Many of the training sessions and meetings for all types of Carers are held in our Buckley offices or an alternative venue of mutual convenience. Some meetings are held in Carers own homes.

Individual supervision of full, respite and Sessional Carers are held, unless otherwise arranged in the Carers own home

For full and respite Carers, supervision is usually once weekly and of between one and two hours + duration.

For Sessional Carers, frequency and intensity of supervision is dependant upon the type of work you are undertaking at the time.

WE ARE A SMALL, BUT EXPANDING, COMPANY WHICH ENABLES US TO STILL BE

"LARGE ENOUGH TO CARE
SMALL ENOUGH TO EXCEL!"

RECRUITMENT

In order to meet constant demand from the wide range of local authorities who use our services, for placements, we need to constantly increase our teams of Carers, respite Carers and Sessional Carers.

WHAT TYPES OF PEOPLE BECOME CARERS?

The simple answer to that is YOU – as long as you have no major problems. For full and respite caring you need to have lived successfully with your partner for at least one year.

THERE IS NO GIVEN PRESCRIPTION AS TO WHAT MAKES A 'PERFECT CARER' BECAUSE ALL THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE NEEDING CARE ARE SUCH INDIVIDUALS EACH WITH SEPARATE NEEDS.

THEREFORE, WE NEED A DIVERSE MIX OF CARERS SO THAT WE CAN MATCH THESE NEEDS CAREFULLY AND SUCCESSFULLY

You may have only one spare bedroom in your home and have children of your own who are almost grown up or you may have grown up children but still have the energy, enthusiasm and liking of children to want to care for others. You may not have had your own children but have adequate in depth experience of mixing with them.

You may have room in your home for a 'family group' or a Mother or Dad and baby or an expectant young mum.

You may be particularly interested in helping a young person who has 'lost track' and is in trouble with the law.

You may have had experience of working with abused children or young people, or children with disabilities. You may even have been abused yourself, have come to terms with this and have the insight to help others experiencing this problem.

Whatever your background and experiences, we need Carers who have a caring and balanced approach to children in need of all ages and from a variety of backgrounds.

You may be single; married; separated; widowed; divorced; in a stable relationship.

You may be from a child care profession or other caring professions, or have gained your experience through bringing up children of your own, or other peoples children.

You may be in your twenties through to sixties –age is immaterial. You have to be in reasonable health and need an abundance of physical and emotional energy, patience, understanding and a genuine compassion and interest in children and young people. You must also have had the relevant experience and skills which will prove that you are able to cope with the challenge and demands of caring for them - even when the going gets tough!

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CARING

As a full time Carer, you will look after up to three children, in your own home, on a full time basis, and treat them as members of your own family. You will be assisted to do this by a wide range of professional staff, and the other Carers in **NEWFOCAS** Ltd who are always on hand to give support, advice and the wisdom that comes from many collective years of fostering.

You do not have to have previous experience as a Carer because full training will be given. You need room to spare in your home, at least one spare bedroom and a family that is in full agreement with you fostering, you must have had some experience of caring for, and interacting with, children of all ages, and experience of managing challenge. You also need to have some understanding as to why children and young people behave in a challenging manner. Most importantly, you must genuinely LIKE children and young people of all ages, be comfortable in their company and have an ability to communicate effectively with them

Respite Carers look after children from one to 21 nights, to give the full time Carers a break. You should have room in you home, a spare bedroom and the agreement of all your family that you offer respite placements. Ideally this is on a planned basis, but sometimes respite Carers offer a crucial service in preventing the breakdown of a placement in crisis. You should therefore be quite flexible in your ability to fit into emergency situations. By offering a breathing space for all concerned it means that the full time Carers can get back on target. As with above, you need understanding, a genuine liking of and desire to help children and young people.

In addition Carers who look after children within their own homes, are supported by:

Sessional Carers who do not look after children and young people in their own homes. Instead they either undertake planned programmes of work for fixed periods of time, working within the foster home, or taking the child or young person, out into the community for a wide range of activities such as swimming and other sports, socialisation skills, enabling children and young people have contact with their family, etc. Sessional Carers also play a vital role on helping full and respite Carers cope in crisis and emergency situations, may offer support at work place, school or college, in fact, the variety of this role is infinite and a Sessional Carer should be confident within such a flexible task.

REWARD

What's in it for you?

Apart from the very real personal satisfaction of helping children, young people and their families, who are needy, we also appropriately cover your costs for the task.

FOR FULL TIME CARERS:



Subsistence as recommended by the Fostering Network and a significant enhancement.

FOR RESPITE CARERS:



£60 per day

FOR SESSIONAL CARERS:



At least £10 per hour

All Carers work on a self-employed basis

MISSION STATEMENT

NEWFOCAS Ltd is an Independent Fostering-plus Agency committed to providing high quality, family based therapeutic placements using innovative approaches to working with children and young people between the ages of 0-18+ with challenging behaviour and complex needs and aftercare for emotionally immature young adults all of whom may not, otherwise have the opportunity to experience family life and also provides short to medium term assessment in family accommodation to expectant and new parent(s) whose baby or young child is deemed to be at risk

We are an Equal Opportunities Employer

NEWFOCAS Ltd is determined not to discriminate on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, health, disability, race or colour.

However, because of the nature of the task, and our responsibilities to ensure the suitability of applicants to work with vulnerable children and young people, our checks on applicants are scrupulous, in line with government expectations and persons with a criminal record may be excluded from appointment, if the nature of the conviction dictates.

Any person who is a schedule 1 offender or with any conviction of a sexual nature will not be considered for any role within **NEWFOCAS Ltd**

What controls our working practice?

We are governed to operate within the requirements of several key pieces of legislation, particularly mindful of the expectations outlined in The Children Act 89, The Care Standards Act 2000, National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, issued by the National Assembly for Wales and the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003 and are committed to providing a service to Local Authorities which offer excellent value for the fees charged, and to working together as outlined in government legislation, in a multi disciplinary manner, with all concerned with the welfare and proper development of the children and young people placed, including their birth families.

We also work closely to both the Looked after Children's (L.A.C.'s) plan and our own **NEWFOCAS Ltd** placement plan, which work to complement each other, and to the service level agreements between ourselves and the placing authority

We are fully registered with The Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales who have regular oversight of our day to day working practice.

Types of NEWFOCAS Ltd Placements on offer:

Assessment places:

We offer assessment places of up to six months duration, which will include a detailed progress or identified needs assessment each week and, if required, a final assessment report for the commissioning service.

Parent / child assessments:

We offer quality, cost effective placements with a high degree of expertise in risk assessing and needs planning for parent and baby/child, formulating an individual assessment programme and move on plans in conjunction with the local authority, guardians, courts and other involved professionals. These can range in duration from three months to two years.

Short-term places:

We offer short term placements of up to two years duration, on a pre-planned basis. However, it is sometimes appropriate to re-evaluate and extend the placement under the assessment terms to that with longer term objective through the statutory reviewing process. Some placements may, after negotiation, last longer than two years.

Preventive placements:

Local authorities are advised to invest wisely in the short term as a cost effective method of managing potential longer term problems by placing children and young people in our excellent therapeutic facilities to prevent breakdown, address identified problems and where our Carers can work alongside birth families and their social work staff in an educational role to help the speedy return of the child or young person to their home.

What types of children and young people need placements?

Generally our placements are in the age range of 6 – 18+ years although we do have some sibling groups, one or more who are younger than this age range. We also offer parent and child/baby placements where the baby can be any age from new born to toddling. The assessment, short term and preventive guidelines are followed with clear, time scaled aims and objectives so that you, as a Carer would have some idea as to the aimed length of the placement. Although we do try and stick to the plans, sometimes they change so you would have to be quite flexible in your approach to fostering. Children come into care for a variety of reasons and all come under the umbrella term “Children In Need”.

The assessment process

For Sessional Carers:

You will be asked to complete an application form, in which you will outline your skills and experience of working with children and young people with challenging behaviours and/or complex needs. You will have to give the names of two referees and also, if you do not already have a current CRB clearance (Criminal Records Bureau) to enhanced level. You will have to complete the application and provide the necessary documents of proof as to who you are, where you live etc.

For respite and full time Carers:

You will undergo the comprehensive assessment process which means that you will be CRB cleared to an enhanced level and have various other statutory checks made, including health, social services, probation, NSPCC etc. At the same time one of our social work staff will be visiting you and your family on a regular basis, getting to know you and you, us and completing a very detailed assessment of you and your family life, your background, why you want to foster, and what skills and life experience you have towards this. You will have been attending the weekly Carer meetings which forms part of the assessment process and you may be required to attend induction training. The assessing social worker will have visited your referees and, if you have worked as a foster Carer with another agency, will have either seen your agency file or received a reference from that agency. This is quite an intrusive process, at the end of which a comprehensive report is presented to a Panel of people who will then decide if you and your family have the necessary social and attitudinal skills needed to undertake this exacting work.

Don't be put off by this, because you will be supported and encouraged at each stage of the way – but we feel it is right to be honest with you from the very beginning, because it is a lot of hard work for all concerned, but at the end of the day, we, and in turn, you, are entrusted to the care of some of the most vulnerable and needy children and young people in society today.

Variety is the spice of life!

Children are referred to **NEWFOCAS** Ltd from a variety of backgrounds, from all ages, and from all walks of life. They may be 'in care' for many reasons, from being ill-treated by someone in their family, out of control of their parents, in trouble with the law, etc, and the children and young people we care for are generally deemed 'hard to place' and have often, but not always, had a variety of previous placements who have not coped with their behaviours, or may not have been able to keep them safe.

We therefore need a wide range of full and respite Carers who may have differing skills and preferences, expertise and backgrounds to undertake the task focussed pieces of work on offer to local authorities for children, young people and their families. Potential Carers who are new to the work will proceed in the first instance by undertaking pieces of Sessional work, whilst their comprehensive assessment is being undertaken. In this way both **NEWFOCAS** Ltd and the potential Carers, will have a chance to explore the various ranges of fostering in a realistic and practical manner.















Also, whilst undergoing this process, which, dependant upon previous experience and aptitude, can take between four and twelve months on receipt of your completed application form, potential Carers will be linked into existing Carers within **NEWFOCAS** Ltd and will be invited to training events, team meetings and other such informative activities.

All applicants will be expected to undertake preparation training during the course of the assessment process. We will review with you, at each stage of the process, how the assessment is progressing, and would hopefully reach a mutual decision if it felt unwise to follow the application through. We do seek persons of the highest calibre, with a standard of care and accommodation which at the very least meets National Minimum Standards.

Making placements

Once your application is completed and you are approved through Panel, you will then be available, through **NEWFOCAS** Ltd to take placements, However, as we are very careful to match your vacancy with the needs of any potential placement, there may be times when you do not have any placement, although this is unusual as the frequency of requests for placements from local authorities, usually means that we have a waiting list. Also, we always try for planned admissions with introductions, but sometimes emergencies occur. In such circumstances we ensure that we undertake a full risk assessment to safeguard you, your family and the placement.

SOME OF THE SKILLS NEEDED FOR THE CARING ROLE

-  A real liking of and a proven commitment to children and young persons in the looked after system.
-  A flexible approach to dealing with challenging behaviours and difficult situations and ability to remain calm under pressure.
-  Have 'stickability' and will not give up on children and young people when the going gets tough.
-  Are prepared and able to use all the support systems and therapeutic interventions and advice to the benefit of the child/young person placed and also for family members.
-  Are prepared to work as a crucial part of a therapeutic team.
-  At least one Carer in the household has a clean driving licence and access to transport.
-  An ability to empathise with children, young people and their families, and to work with them to a clear plan.
-  An ability and commitment to keep appropriate diary information, and to continually assess the success and progress of the care plan.
-  An ability to communicate appropriately with children and young people of all ages, birth family members, colleagues and a wide range of multi-disciplinary professionals involved in a child/young person's life.
-  A commitment to weekly supervision.
-  A commitment to attend **NEWFOCAS** Ltd weekly Carers meetings and training sessions and a strong motivation to the continual learning process and openness to new working ideas, including training to NVQ3 in Care.
-  Full and respite Carers should have at least one bedroom available to be dedicated to fostering.
-  Be interested enough and able to contribute confidently and pro-actively to the ongoing development of **NEWFOCAS** Ltd and feel comfortable as a team member.
-  You live in an area where there is good access to all amenities needed by children and young people to live a full and balanced way of life and the commitment to encourage involve children and young people in age appropriate activities to develop their social skills.

Above all, you should share our philosophical approach, have no relevant criminal convictions and be willing to make a positive commitment to **NEWFOCAS** Ltd - **IF THIS IS THE CASE – PLEASE GET IN TOUCH**

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND SUPPORT FOR FULL AND RESPITE CARERS

-  FOUR HOURS 'TIME OUT', PER CHILD, PER WEEK – Full time Carers.
-  Up to 26 days paid "holiday" per annum, classed as overnight disturbance allowance.
-  In house respite facilities which can be booked in advance.
-  Support, as needed, through any personal crisis.
-  Weekly supervision.
-  Personal development review and training needs analysis.
-  Individual training programmes to help you cope with particular behaviours of any child/young person placed.
-  Excellent internal and external training plus NVQ weekly supervision and as much social work and other professional support as you need.
-  Professional indemnity cover.
-  You have direct, fully supported access to an established team of social workers, any time of the day or night, every day of the year.
-  A CHRISTMAS BONUS SCHEME AND COMPANY GIFT when to company has had a successful year
-  A Christmas party, with father Christmas and a disco for your own and foster children and young people.
-  Your birthday is marked and a gift given.
-  You invoice us directly each week, so your foster payments are always up to date and in your control, paid into your bank account by BACS on a Thursday.
-  We offer organised activities for all children and young people including your birth children.
-  We initially provide you with a fax machine to facilitate swift and easy communication with us and social services.
-  We provide as much information as we have, as soon as we get it, about all children and young people placed with you.
-  You have ongoing access to in house and consultant expertise.
-  For your placements there is education liaison and alternative to education programmes.
-  Each placement has an individual support programme.

FROM OUR RESEARCH THESE ARE SOME OF THE FEELINGS THAT CARERS EXPRESS IF THEY DO NOT RECEIVE GOOD SUPPORT, TRAINING AND ADVICE



“I feel overworked and undervalued”



“No-one seems to listen to my contribution or ideas”



“No-one ever tells me that I have done a good job – I want to feel appreciated”



“I never seem to be able to get straight answers to my questions about the children I care for – I need information”



“It often takes days for people to ring me back, if at all”



“I get ‘official visits’ but I still feel unsupported”



“I think what I have to say goes into a ‘black hole’ because no-one ever seems to give any answers”

THEY ARE THINGS THAT MANY OF OUR CARERS EXPERIENCED BEFORE THEY CAME TO US

YOU MAY NOT HAVE BEEN A PREVIOUS CARER, BUT THEY ARE CERTAINLY THINGS WHICH WE WANT TO PREVENT OUR CARERS EXPERIENCING

READ ON TO FIND OUT WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT NEWFOCAS

WHAT OUR CARERS SAY ABOUT US

NEWFOCAS Ltd is currently undergoing the Investors in People Standard and is pleased to have achieved high standards despite the fact that we are such a 'young' organisation.

Below is a flavour of what has been said about us.

From the Carers.....

"We are like one big, happy family – the Carers are there for one another"

"I can always get hold of someone to talk to, day or night and it doesn't have to be a big crisis either"

"We have had some brilliant training"

"'Stickability' frightened me at first but I can see how it benefits the kids and how they come on when you work through the bad bits – respite was a Godsend to help us do it"

"The management is accessible and they listen to us"

"It's great to be valued enough to be taken out for Christmas Dinner"

*"We feel very privileged to be a part of **NEWFOCAS**"*

"Weekly supervision visits seemed strange at first but now I really look forward to them - my link worker is like a friend"

*"We would strongly recommend others to apply to foster with **NEWFOCAS**"*

"We are always looking for ways to improve our services and Carers ideas are valued and listened to"

WHAT PLACING AUTHORITY SOCIAL WORKERS SAY

“A great support network for Carers and children”

“Carers are supported and protected, much better than local authority provision”

“I feel I know what is going on, with the child, they keep you informed. That helps me when I see the child and his birth family”

*“They are better value than ***** (other well known IFA)”*

“He (the child) needed a specialist placement, where counselling was available, his needs have been met very professionally”

*“The social workers (at **NEWFOCAS**) are always available to speak to”*

“They seem to have the ability to match children’s needs to a placement, rather than the other way around, in my experience. The children come first.”

“Their professional (fostering) standards are high, in fact better than those in this department.”

“They are good at communication and have a flexible approach; problems are coped with rather than being handed back to me. You really can work in partnership with them.”

“They are pro-active and just seem to know when to put in additional resources to meet the child’s needs. Children feel secure and well cared for.”

COMMENTS FROM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE and BIRTH FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAVE PLACEMENTS WITHIN NEWFOCAS

*"I feel that they (my foster parents and **NEWFOCAS** social workers) listen to me – that's a first!"*

"They have time for me"

"Without them I think I would have lost my child for ever"

"I can make friends now; I see that in the past I couldn't"

*"Why can't all social workers be like them at **NEWFOCAS**?"*

"I have grown up since I came here"

"It's smashing just having someone you can talk to anytime you want"

"I've got my little girl back again, thank you"

"The Carers were brilliant; they welcomed us into their home when our son wasn't allowed to visit us at home"

"The food is great"

"They have some idea about my music, and they are willing to learn"

"They (the Carers) worked with all of us to have our lad home. They gave us the confidence to have another go. Social services wanted him in a residential home"

HAVE YOU GOT MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS?

We hope that you have found this booklet informative. We don't expect to have given you all the answers and, for this reason, we would encourage you to complete the form below, or better still, pick up the phone and chat to one of our staff about **NEWFOCAS** Ltd how we work and whether any of the caring roles would suit you.

Don't be afraid to ring now if you are a bit undecided. It takes a while to process applications so the sooner you start the ball rolling the better.

Remember that there is an expectation on all our staff and Carers to work to the highest possible standards and this applies to Carers homes as well.

So, if you feel positively motivated, are caring and child oriented and are interested in joining us to help in the huge task of providing good quality placements for children and young people, 'in need', then we look forward to hearing from you. We have enclosed some basic forms to complete to take your application on stage further. After we receive the completed form, someone will be in touch very quickly.

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