



FOSTER CARERS' NEWSLETTER



WELCOME

Hello and welcome to the latest issue of the Foster Carers' Newsletter.

It is a very busy time for us at the moment as we continue to work to make improvements to the service so you and our children can get the best from us during these unusual times.

We would like to take a moment to thank you for your patience and determination during these unusual times. COVID 19 has affected us all in many different ways, but together we will come out of this stronger than ever. We would like to send my condolences to all those who have lost loved ones to this horrible disease. Just know we are here for you.

Because of this pandemic, this has meant we have had to change our working ways and adapt to doing most things online.

As always, we are extremely grateful to all of you for your continued hard work, thoughtfulness and sensitivity, as well as your commitment to achieve positive change for children and families in Haringey.

If you have anything that you would like to share or information you would like to see in future issues of the newsletter, please email fosteringrecruitment@haringey.gov.uk

Best wishes

The Haringey Fostering Service and HFCA

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Hello from Joy Williams



Hello Fellow Foster Carers,

Welcome to our first Haringey Foster Carers Association newsletter which we will be sending out via Vanessa Johnson, Marketing Officer within the Fostering Team. You will receive the newsletter on a bi-monthly basis.

My name is Joy Williams, foster carer & chairperson for HFCA. I have met with many of you in person. Our Secretary is Sonia Cumming-Bovelle & Linda Jones is our Treasurer. All HFCA association members are foster carers of varying experience and we are working hard to support one another.

The aim of the association is to bring Haringey Foster Carers together, to provide a stronger voice when liaising with fostering management about issues concerning carers and the children in our care.

'Supporting carers to inspire young people in Haringey'

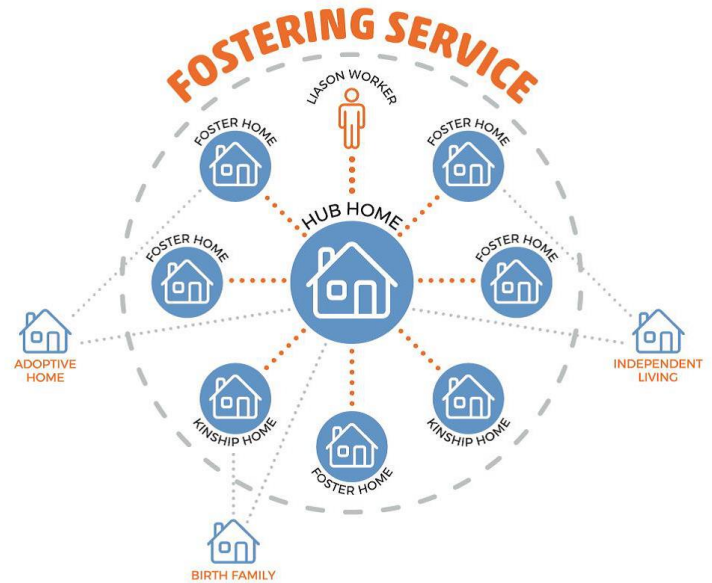
- We provide confidential/independent support for foster carers.
- Hold monthly HFCA committee meetings during the evening (currently online)
- Seek views of foster carers and represent these views with fostering management where applicable.
- Provide peer support during and after an allegation has been raised (on request and within the limit of our expertise).
- Provide telephone support (including out of hours support, on request).
- Assist with the completion of mandatory TSDs (on request).
- Organise and hold annual events for younger and older looked after children & their foster carers.

HFCA has grown in numbers during the lockdown period and it has never been easier to become a member and attend meetings which are currently held online. We are developing our own website which we will share with you in the next newsletter.

Please feel free to email us at **haringey.fostercarers.association@hotmail.co.uk** if you have any questions or comments.

We look forward to communicating with you in the coming months and we hope that you will get on board!

Mockingbird Programme



Last month Haringey launched a new fostering network called the Mockingbird programme, that will support fosters carers to develop strong placements, and help to bolster relationships between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families.

The Mockingbird programme aims to deliver community-based foster care using an extended family model whereby members will receive respite care, peer support, regular joint planning and training, and can take part in social activities.

This innovative programme will ensure Haringey fulfils Mockingbird's underpinning principles which include active child protection, community-based care and cultural relevancy, identity and belonging, among others.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Mockingbird programme – or fostering in Haringey – please contact Deborah Sterling, Patricia Clarke or Mark Render. (contact details below)

Refer a Friend

There is a continued shortage of foster carers in Haringey.

If you know a friend with a spare room who you think would be able to do the great work you do, then remember we will give you £500 for any referral that results in approval at panel.

To make a referral simply contact the fostering recruitment team on **02084893754** or **fosteringrecruitment@haringey.gov.uk** with their contact details.



Say Hello To Your Mockingbird Hub Home Carer - Tonia Burris



Hello I'm Tonia Burris, the Hub Home Carer for the newly established Mockingbird programme in Haringey Fostering Services. I have a wealth of experience as a foster carer, as well as looking after children and young people in various capacities.

Mockingbird uses the concept of an extended family model within a constellation, which is led by the Hub Home Carer and 6-10 satellite families working closely to a dedicated hub home offering support. The constellation contains a mixture of placement types of varied levels of need including; mainstream fostering, special guardianship orders, friends and family placements, adoptive placements, staying put placements and children and young people living in residential care.

The hub home is the primary source of support provided through Mockingbird. The Hub Home acts as the glue that unites the satellite carers as an extended family. A Hub home carer provides a listening ear and someone to turn to who understands the challenges of fostering to reduce isolation so that carers do not feel like they are on their own.

As a Hub Carer, I will offer sleepovers, peer support, emergency support, joint planning and social activities to satellite homes within the constellation. Through regular activities, the constellation will develop a supportive community like an extended family, providing children and young people with a more positive experience of care. This enables a lighter touch connection, allowing children and young people to transition to a new living situation without experiencing loss of important relationships.

One of the central roles of the Hub Carer is to provide proactive support and intervention that will mitigate the risk of a placement breaking down or a foster carer resigning. The unique role of the hub home carer enables both formal and informal interventions to be put in place to support placements during times of crisis. Providing stable environments and secure attachments for children in short and long term placements which means the hub home carer plays a vital role advocating for children and their former foster carers to maintain a relationship.

My role as a Hub Carer is crucial to the success of Mockingbird. It can be rewarding, but it will also be demanding, varied and unpredictable, building relationships with children and young people of all ages. There's a lot of organisation and planning needed to make a constellation work effectively.

Thank you

Coronavirus



How to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus:

- Wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- Always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

What to do if you, a member of your household or a looked after child shows signs of symptoms:

- Follow the latest medical advice from the NHS
- Contact the duty fostering SW in office hours on **0208 4894892** – Out of hours number and weekends **07967336426**
- We will contact you regularly during the working hours – inform the child's SW and put a warning note on your and the child's file to avoid unnecessary visits – discuss a plan with you how to manage over the following 2 weeks.

Please also keep an eye on your emails, as we are sending updates regarding the virus to all our foster carers.

For further information visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

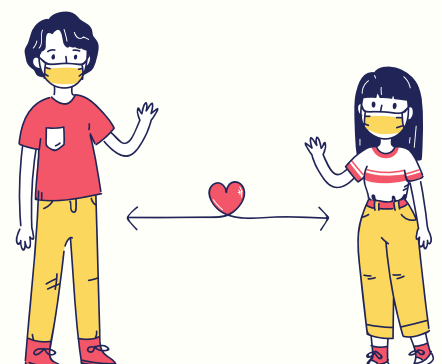
Wear a mask



Wash your hands



Social distance



Fostering During COVID-19

Lockdown

During this unusual year, we haven't heard many stories in the media about how foster carers have been coping during the lockdown. Jacquie is one of our amazing foster carers that has been fostering for over 10 years. Jacquie has taken a few minutes out of her day to share what it's been like to foster during the coronavirus lockdown.

Lockdown has been a challenge

"Lockdown has been a challenge. We are currently in our third lockdown and it's fair to say we are all looking forward to our 'normal' routine returning. Like everyone, I am missing my family, and as a single carer, not being able to meet up with friends for a coffee and chat has been very difficult.



The hardest challenge from all 3 lockdowns have been the outdoor restrictions, and how often the rules have changed regarding this. My children didn't understand how one week we could go to the park and meet friends, and then we couldn't. It was extremely frustrating which obviously had an impact on their behaviour.

At first, the children thought being off school was great and would just be like school holidays. However, once home-schooling started, and the level of restrictions imposed on them, they were desperate for some semblance of normality to return".

The positives

"The good things that have happened because of lockdown are the children learning patience, and how to accommodate each other without arguing (too much). There are 3 of them, all with special needs, and only 1 of me, so it wasn't easy but I'm proud of how hard they have all tried and adapted to a what was and still is a very stressful situation.

We also got a new puppy called Stanley a week before the first lockdown, so he was great at giving the children a new focus and responsibility. Also, we tried our hands at gardening and sowed some potatoes, strawberries, and carrots. I think it's fair to say we need to practice our gardening skills!"

Jacquie's story is only one out of the many foster carers that are looking after Haringey's children during these uncertain and challenging times. Foster carers are the unsung heroes of this pandemic and just because the rest of the world is on pause, children in need of a loving family certainly cannot take a pause.



Spurred On To Foster

Now more than ever foster carers are desperately needed in Haringey to provide a warm, loving and nurturing home for children and young people in care.

Janet has been a foster carer in Haringey for six years and currently looks after Farouk through Tottenham Hotspur's To Care is To Do programme. To Care Is To Do is designed to engage and inspire looked after children and care leavers within the local community, and sees Tottenham Hotspur Foundation provide a range of support services to help improve educational attainment, increase employability, develop life skills and promote healthy and active lifestyles.

Janet has been Farouk's foster carer for five years and during this time she has seen such a positive change as he has grown up, and with the help of the programme, she has seen his confidence blossom.

Janet said: "I heard about the programme through Haringey Council. Since Farouk has been on the programme, Spurs has played a big part in Farouk's development, it has definitely helped to boost his confidence. He even got a job at Spurs as a steward.

"My experience of fostering through Haringey Council has been quite good. The support from my social worker has been good. I haven't felt the need to call my social worker to tell them I can't cope or need help, I just get on with it, we have built an understanding between us. However, I know that my social worker is always there for me."

Janet is very proud of Farouk's progress with Spurs, especially after his story was highlighted on the club's website and through social media. His experience at the London Academy of Excellence Tottenham has also been good. He is doing well there and plans to go on to Oxford University.

Janet's story is only one out of the many foster carers that have come through Haringey and have signed up their foster child to the To Care is To Do programme.

If you would like to find out more about the To Care is To Do please visit the To Care is To Do **website**. To read the rest of Janet's story, click **here**.



Special Guardianship Story

"I have been the special guardian for my brother for seven years.

My life changed dramatically over night, I was 25 and had no children of my own. I no longer just had myself to think about and I was unable to do the things that I was doing before.

The hardest thing about being a special guardianship carer is the constant pressure I put on myself to not fail and make sure I give him the best life I possibly can.

Challenges I have as a special guardianship carer are trying to set boundaries and balancing being his sister as well as his guardian. Some decisions I may have are not too popular with him and being told that you are not my mum.

Being a special guardianship carer can be really hard, however my relationship with my brother is very strong and that is a highlight that we've been able through everything to keep that bond.

I've learnt that there is really no right or wrong way of doing things, you've just got to follow your heart and hope that the bad times and the challenging times will be rewarded in the end. I can look back and be really proud of how far we've come as a family, I've learnt that it's okay to ask for help when you're finding things hard and it's good to talk to other people in similar situations.

My experience with Haringey has been really positive. When I reached out, the support that was available has been really helpful, I just wish that I had known about the support that was available a lot sooner because it has changed my circumstances, it's taken off a lot of financial pressure.

Through Haringey I've also been able to access support networks with grandparents plus and meet with other people that are in similar situations. This has really helped, as I don't feel so alone and it's good to hear how other people are coping and learning the different ways in which you can do things to help.

Through Haringey I've been able to access parenting and mindfulness courses and lots of other things that are available to help."

FRIDAY ART CLUB

First session: Friday March 5th

7-10 YEARS: 4.00 - 4.45PM

11-15 YEARS: 5.00 - 5.45PM

Please bring basic art materials

Email:

**lauren.black@tottenhamhotspur.com
to reserve your place!**

Art Club

Haringey Virtual School are running an online Art club for Looked-After Children in conjunction with Tottenham Hotspur Foundation. The club will be running on the First Friday of every month.

Any additional siblings/children in the household (non-fostered) are also welcome to join the session.

BOLOH Helpline

Boloh Helpline is a service launched on the 1st October by Barnardo's with funding from the National Emergencies Trust. The Helpline is a response to the impact of the pandemic on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities who have been disproportionately affected.

Helpline staff are either Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community, or have prior professional experience of delivering services to children, young people and their families from these communities.

**Have you been affected
by Coronavirus?**

We are here to help.

**Call the
Boloh**

**helpline for free
support for you
and your family**

Lines are open between
Monday and Friday
1pm – 8pm on

0800 1512 605

Or talk to us on our
webchat by visiting
helpline.barnardos.org.uk
and click on the icon
on the bottom right

**Believe in
children
Barnardo's**

MALE FOSTER CARERS' WHATSAPP GROUP

We have created a WhatsApp group for our male foster carers, so they can share and advise each other, as well as be kept up to date about any other upcoming events. Like a chat forum.

If you would be happy to be added to this WhatsApp group, please send an email to Mark Render
Mark.Render@haringey.gov.uk.

Please note that your phone number will be visible to those in the WhatsApp group.








Free Psychotherapeutic Support

'BRAVE' run by Body and Soul Charity which is offering free psychotherapeutic support for foster carers and social workers. They have more than 100 fully-qualified and registered volunteer psychotherapists offering FREE telephone sessions with any foster carer or social worker who feels overwhelmed at the moment - TOTALLY FREE, at a time convenient for you, **really easy to book** on your phone, with longer-term follow-up psychological support down the line, and resources available for children and the rest of the family if needed. The service is available for close family members too as they may be very concerned about transmission of the infection etc. It doesn't matter where you are based, **the support is available and can be booked right now.**



London Fire Brigade & HFCA

Free afternoon, a unique chance to experience a working fire station, to meet and hang out with your local heroes.

-  Meet your local firefighters.
-  Learn about fire safety at home.
-  Watch the Fire Cadets display & find out how to join the LFB Fire Cadets.
-  Look around a working fire engine .
-  Have some pizza with the firefighters.
-  Book a free Home Fire Safety Visit.
-  Ask the fire fighters questions.

THIS EVENT WILL BE AT TOTTENHAM FIRE STATION DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS. Date to be confirmed.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We want to ensure that whenever we are sharing a story or providing information, we are able to share the views of a wide number of foster carers. We would greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete **this short (approximately five minutes) survey.**

Staff Email Addresses and Useful Contacts

Head of Service – Colette.Elliott-Coopere@haringey.gov.uk

Service Manager – Christine.Mee@haringey.gov.uk

Fostering Manager – Deborah.Sterling@haringey.gov.uk

Fostering Manager – Phildelia.Amele@haringey.gov.uk

Business support officer – gillian.bhola@haringey.gov.uk

Supervising Social Workers

Patricia Clarke – Patricia.Clarke@haringey.gov.uk

Sharon Daley – Sharon.Daley@haringey.gov.uk

Belgin Istanbulu – Belgin.Istanbulu@haringey.gov.uk

Beverlin Mckenzie – Beverlin.Mckenzie@haringey.gov.uk

Helen Patterson – Helen.Patterson@haringey.gov.uk

Paulette Taylor – Paulette.Taylor@haringey.gov.uk

Mark Render – Mark.Render@haringey.gov.uk

Saniye Elbasti – Saniye.elbasti@haringey.gov.uk

Useful websites

[Foster carers handbook](#)

[Haringey Fostering website](#)

[UK's leading fostering charity](#)

HFCA

Haringey.fostercarers.association@hotmail.co.uk

Special Guardianship/ recruitment and assessment team

Meenakshi Kumar (Manager) – meenakshi.kumar@haringey.gov.uk

Sheron Wilson – Sheron.wilson@haringey.gov.uk

Peggy Madonsela – Peggy.Madonsela@haringey.gov.uk

Jane Wasikeh – Jane.wasikeh@haringey.gov.uk

Lorretta Mayers – Lorretta.mayers@haringey.gov.uk

Useful numbers

Fostering duty number – 0208 489 4892

Out of hours number – 0796 733 6426 (available from 6pm to 11pm)

EDT number – 0203 817 4453 / 0208 489 0000 (available from 11pm to 9am)

Booking onto training – 0208 489 5604

Recruitment number – 0208 489 3754

Useful email

Duty matters – fostering.support@haringey.gov.uk

Carer recruitment – fosteringrecruitment@haringey.gov.uk

Carer finance – FosteringFinance@haringey.gov.uk

Booking onto training – Gillian.Bhola@haringey.gov.uk

