



Clifford House's Guide to Transferring Foster Agency

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Welcome to Clifford House

If you're eager to be a part of a fostering agency which goes above and beyond to support its foster families, we welcome you to consider transferring from your current agency to Clifford House. While transferring may seem like a daunting and complex process, in this guide you'll learn just how easy and beneficial it can be to transfer to our local, community-focused fostering agency.

Transferring to Clifford House has plenty of benefits for you and your family, including:

- A fast-track transfer process for experienced foster parents
- Support tailored to every member of your family
- Expert training which you won't find anywhere else
- A reliable and dedicated team of professionals who will support you in every aspect of your fostering journey

Generous fostering allowances- if we don't meet your current fostering agency's payments, we'll match them!

If you're ready to begin reaping the rewards of being part of our Clifford House family, contact us now using our **online enquiry form**, or give us a call on **0800 369 8515**.

Eager to learn more? Read on to discover why Clifford House could be the perfect place for you to continue your fostering journey.





An Introduction from Lesley Greenfield

'Hi, my name is Lesley and I'm the Registered Manager here at Clifford House. To give you a little idea about who Clifford House are, we're a small independent fostering agency based in the West Midlands with a big beating heart. One of the most important things to us is creating a strong sense of family in everything we do.

We're small enough to know all our families and children and have a friendly and professional team who will provide you with the quality training and support you need to make a real difference. Being a foster parent is life changing – for you, your family, and the children in your care – and we're committed to making it the very best experience it can be for everyone.'

- Lesley Greenfield, Registered Manager at Clifford House

Meet the Team

Here at Clifford House we pride ourselves on being a local agency with strong ties to our community, with over 25 years of supporting fostering families across the South and West Midlands. When you join Clifford House, you join a close-knit network of dedicated social workers & administrators who work together to provide the best standard of care and support for looked after children. Our small and dedicated team allows us to provide a personalised experience to our fostering families.

Let's meet the team!



Natalie Hall, Supervising Social Worker

'Hi, I'm Natalie, one of the supervising social workers and I cover the West Midlands area, including Birmingham. My role is to help foster carers to support children who come into care. I do this through monthly supervisions, and support groups – ensuring all our foster parents have the tools and support they need to provide therapeutic care.'



Louise Parker, Principal Social Worker

'Hi, my name is Louise and I'm the Principal Social Worker here at Clifford House. My role is to support foster parents and children, looking after their holistic health and wellbeing. Due to our size and personable approach, you are never speaking to a stranger. At Clifford House we'll look after you 24/7 and give you all the support you need to be successful in your fostering journey.'



Latisha Harvey, Supervising Social Worker

'Hi my name is Latisha I am a supervising social worker at Clifford House. This means I support foster carers in trying to achieve the best outcomes for the young people they support. I cover most areas in the West Midlands including Birmingham, Sandwell, Wolverhampton, and Bromsgrove.'



Lisa Pritchard, Supervising Social Worker

‘Hi, my name is Lisa. I have been a social worker since 2012 and joined the team as a supervising social worker at Clifford House in January 2023. I provide guidance and support to foster carers to help keep children in their care safe, thrive and reach their full potential. I work within the West Midlands area: currently Stourbridge, Kidderminster, Rednal and Solihull.’



Jade Fox, Student Social Worker

‘Hi, my name is Jade and I’m currently in the process of studying for my degree apprenticeship with Clifford House. We have so much support here at Clifford House, including carer forums, Trauma Informed training, and a 24/7 out of hours service which means you’re never on your own.’



“It was the support network they offer that really attracted me. Everyone who works at Clifford House is absolutely fantastic! They are really lovely people – a real inspiration.”

- Sarah, foster parent with Clifford House

Why Transferring Could be the Right Choice for You

Why Transfer to Clifford House?

Ensuring that foster children are given the best level of care, support and safety is at the heart of everything foster parents do. At Clifford House we share those values.

We're a small team with a local office, focused on serving the West Midlands and Worcestershire area. Being part of a small local team means that we are able to allocate more time and resources to each of our families, ensuring that you feel valued and understood. We strive to offer our foster families the best fostering experience possible by providing excellent training, a strong financial package, a great matching service and around-the-clock support tailored to you.

If you feel that your current fostering agency isn't taking care of you and your family, it may be time to consider transferring. We would love to welcome you into our family, and believe that by transferring to us you can rest assured that you and your loved ones are in the care of a fostering agency which understands your unique circumstances and strives to take care of you as individuals.



“I would shout from the rooftops just how good Clifford House is and the support that you get... they really build an ethos of a family environment.”

- Phil, experienced foster parent



Some signs it might be time to transfer...

‘The support offered by my current agency isn’t meeting the needs of me or my foster child.’

‘I struggle to find referrals and when I do get matches, they don’t seem like a good fit.’

‘I don’t feel like my current fostering agency understands the individual needs of me or my foster children. I feel like a cog in a big machine.’

‘The training offered by my current agency isn’t up to scratch. I feel I could be learning so much more!’

If any of the above points resonate with you, transferring to a new fostering agency who offer ample support might be the right choice for you, your foster child, and the rest of your family.



Transferring: Your Questions Answered

Q: Is transferring a complex, lengthy process?

A: Transferring from one agency to another is easier than you might expect, whether you're transferring from your local authority to an independent agency or if you're transferring between independent fostering agencies. Here at Clifford House we take your previous experience into account and endeavour to make the process as streamlined as possible. If you're an experienced foster parent, your application will be fast-tracked, making the whole process super quick and easy. We aim to finalise the transfer process for experienced foster parents within just 12 weeks of your initial enquiry.

Q: Can I transfer to Clifford House if I currently foster with my local authority?

A: The simple answer is, yes! If you're currently fostering with your local authority, transferring to an independent fostering agency can feel like a daunting process. There's no need to worry, however. Independent fostering agencies work closely with local authorities to ensure the best outcomes for children, and here at Clifford House we have worked hard to make our transferring process as streamlined as possible.

Q: Do I have to resign from my current agency before I can begin the transfer process?

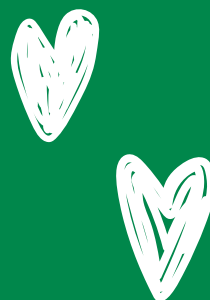
A: This is not a requirement for moving between fostering agencies. Your current foster agency must be informed of your intention to transfer, and then all three parties involved- you as a foster parent, your current agency or local authority, and our team at Clifford House- will work closely together to achieve a smooth transition and find the best outcome for the young person in your care.

If you decide to transfer to Clifford House, a Transfer Protocol Meeting will take place. This meeting will be held with the foster child's local authority and will discuss any welfare concerns around changing fostering agencies, to find ways to minimise disruption for your foster child during the transfer process.

The Benefits of Transferring to Clifford House

Let's take a closer look at some of the great benefits on offer should you choose to transfer to Clifford House. These are just some of the ways in which we go above and beyond to support our foster parents.

- **24/7 help whenever you need us.** Our small friendly team means that no matter when you need us, you'll have the support of someone who knows your unique circumstances and how best to support you and your family. Day or night, our out of hours helpline means that we're only ever a phone call away.
- **Professional support.** At Clifford House you will be able to access tailored support provided by professionals including therapists and educational specialists. You will have the support of a dedicated Supervising Social Worker who will ensure that no matter what challenges you face, you'll always have the support of a strong network of professionals.
- **Small but mighty.** While Clifford House might seem small compared to other fostering agencies, we are part of a wider community of children's services who work up and down the UK to provide excellent care and support for young people. With the backing of a larger community, you can rest assured that you will have access to plenty of resources and support.
- **Family events.** Here at Clifford House, our dedication to community means that we host a range of free local events throughout the year for our foster families and their children. Our family friendly events include summer barbeques, bowling nights, sports days an annual trip to the pantomime and our fabulous Christmas party.



- **Family support.** At Clifford House we take a family-first approach to ensure that every member of your fostering family has a positive experience. We offer a mentoring scheme for our foster parents to connect you with other carers and guest speakers, as well as running support groups for our foster children and any birth children in the home, to ensure that no one feels left behind.
- **Your voice matters.** We hold regular forum events with our foster children and foster parents so that you can tell us what's working and where we need to improve.
- **Respite care.** We offer all of our foster parents two weeks of paid leave per year, should you choose to take it, so that you can relax and recuperate safe in the knowledge that your foster child is being cared for by a professional, experienced foster family.
- **Access to FosterTalk.** All of our foster parents are eligible for a free membership to FosterTalk, a service which provides foster carers with financial advice, counselling, and a discount scheme exclusive to foster parents.



“I love the social aspect. We are involved in the carer forums and participation groups. I am also a buddy/mentor for the other foster parents. It’s lovely that Clifford House runs things for the birth children too, and also the kid’s forum for the looked-after children which is fantastic. It’s a great interactive agency where we all feel part of something.”

– Jennifer, experienced foster parent

Choose Clifford House: Excellent Financial Support

Will I take a financial hit if I decide to transfer?

Contrary to what many people assume, transferring from your local authority to an independent fostering agency usually means an increase in fostering allowance, meaning that your financial situation will most likely improve if you decide it's time to transfer. If your current agency offers higher rates of pay than we do here at Clifford House, we will match what you are currently being paid for any children already placed with you to ensure that transferring to us is always a positive step for you and your family. If you currently have a child in placement, your new contract with us will begin on the day that your old one ends, so there's no need to worry about a gap in finances.

Our Fostering Allowances

At Clifford House we understand that generous fostering payments are a hugely important part of recognising the hard work that our foster parents do each and every day. We offer generous rates which help support our foster parents to give their foster children the best lives possible.

Fostering payments are made up of two halves; a **fostering allowance**, which provides for all expenses related to your foster child including food, activities and clothing. The second payment is a **professional fee** for caregivers.

As a foster parent with Clifford House, you can expect to receive between **£387.80 to £494.76** per week, per child in your care. Enhanced rates will be agreed for complex, solo, or parent and child placements.

Our payment threshold increases over time to reflect the level of experience and wisdom of our foster parents. As an experienced foster parent transferring to Clifford House, it is likely that you will be entitled to our higher payment rates as soon as you transfer with us. You will not need to work your way up the paygrade again. Enhanced rates will be agreed for complex or solo placements.



Additional Financial Benefits

As well as our generous payment scheme, we also offer our families additional financial perks and benefits, including...

- A Birthday fund. Each foster child in your care will receive £100 per year from us here at Clifford House to help celebrate their birthday. You could choose to put this gift towards presents, a birthday party, or an exciting day out.
- A Celebration fund. Our foster children also receive £100 per year designed to be put towards celebrating a religious holiday of their choice.
- The Exchange. All of our foster parents can take advantage of our rewards programme, The Exchange, where you can access hundreds of discounts and cashback offers.
- Refer a Friend. Our exclusive Refer a Friend scheme means that if you recommend a friend to join us at Clifford House as a foster parent, you could receive a thank you gift of up to £3,000. If the person who you refer to us is accepted as a foster parent, you will receive £1,500. If they complete a successful 12-month review, you will receive a further £1,500 as a thank you for helping more children in the Midlands to find a loving home.



Choose Clifford House: Expert Training

At Clifford House we're proud to offer a range of training and refresher courses which will help you in every area of your fostering journey. Our training takes part in small groups and can be completed either online or in person at our office in Bromsgrove.

As well as the core basics such as Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, and Data Protection, we offer a wide range of specialized online courses which cover topics such as:

- Parentification
- Understanding neurodiversity
- Helping children to navigate their body image
- Cyberbullying & online safety
- Supporting LGBTQ+ children

Trauma Informed Training

As well as the training resources described above, we've developed our own bespoke program of trauma informed training which you won't find anywhere else. Designed in house by our knowledgeable team, our evidence-based training is informed by the latest research and empowers our foster parents by proving them with the tools they need to build strong relationships with their foster children and help them to move through the trauma they have experienced



What does it mean to be trauma informed?

Many children in care have experienced adverse childhood experiences, and the resulting trauma can have an enormous impact on a child's social, neurological, and psychological development.

Taking a trauma informed approach when fostering means that we as practitioners recognize that the impact of traumatic experiences can be long-lasting and manifest in many ways. There are six core considerations of trauma informed practice: **safety, collaboration, empowerment, trust, choice and cultural consideration.**

Our trauma informed training teaches our foster parents to implement their understanding of trauma into the daily care of our foster children, using a trauma-informed approach to things such as play, behavioral management and communication to ensure that they receive a high standard of care which is tailored to their individual needs.

What does the training involve?

Our unique trauma informed training program is a voluntary program delivered across six sessions at our Bromsgrove office. You can also join us virtually if you are unable to attend face-to-face.

The sessions are delivered by our supervising social workers and cover modules such as attachment theory and brain development, which help our foster parents to understand the science behind trauma and the reasons behind behaviors which they may notice in their foster child. Further modules equip our foster parents with the tools to help children who are suffering with the long-term effects of trauma, teaching our foster parents how to help their children to build trusting relationships and communicate their feelings around their experiences.

By taking part in our trauma informed training, our foster parents at Clifford House are given the opportunity to upskill their professional practice and are fully equipped to care for children who have experienced trauma.





Choose Clifford House: Great Referrals

Will being part of a smaller agency mean less referrals?

If you currently foster through your local authority or a large independent fostering agency, you may be concerned that joining a smaller independent agency like Clifford House might lead to a decrease in the amount of referrals for children in need of a home which you receive. However, this is not the case.

At Clifford House, we have no shortage of referrals. One area which we serve is Birmingham, the largest local authority in Europe, and we receive referrals daily. As a trusted name in fostering, we have contracts with most of the local authorities throughout the Midlands.

Careful matching

Being part of a small, independent fostering agency has lots of benefits. There are many children in need of a loving place to stay across the Midlands, and it's our job to ensure that they find a loving and supportive home. Our close-knit family approach means that we get to know each of our foster parents on a personal level and can provide an excellent matching service to ensure that you and your foster child are a great fit for one another. Your preferences around age and the types of fostering which you choose to offer will also be taken into account during the matching process.

During the matching process, we will carefully consider if a match is the right choice for everybody. This includes the child you will be fostering, you, and any other members of your household, including other looked after children or birth children.

Your supervising social worker will take the time to get to know you and your family to ensure that any referrals you receive will be suitable, and we will also do our best to ensure that you and your new foster child are able to meet face to face before they move into your home, though in some circumstances, such as if you choose to offer emergency fostering, this may not be possible.

Keeping foster families together

One of the most difficult and heart-breaking aspects of fostering is when a fostering placement breaks down. At Clifford House, our trusted matching process grants our foster parents with peace of mind. We have a very low rate of fostering arrangements breaking down. This careful, considered matching means that we can help our young people and foster families to avoid heartache and ensure the best outcomes for the young people in our care.

Can I transfer while I have a foster child in my home?

If you decide that transferring is the best path for you and your foster family, you can move between fostering agencies while you have a child living with you. Each of the agencies involved will work with you to ensure that this transition is smooth and non-disruptive to your fostering family.



How the transfer process works in 7 easy steps

The transfer process is in many ways similar to the assessment you would have completed when first applying to become a foster parent, though it is a much quicker process, particularly if you are an experienced foster parent. Let's break the transfer process down into 7 simple steps.

Step 1: Enquire

Let us know that you are interested in transferring to Clifford House by getting in contact with our team, either **via our website** or via our phone line, **0800 369 8515**. Our friendly team will tell you everything you need to know and will help you decide if transferring might be the right step for you.



Step 2: Initial Visit

If you decide that you are interested in transferring to Clifford House, great! A member of the team will arrange to visit your home or will connect with you via video call. During this meeting you will learn how much you could be entitled to as a foster parent with Clifford House and how we will support you through the transfer process. You'll also be given the opportunity to ask any questions you like.



Step 3: Application

If you decide Clifford House is the right fit for you and your family, our staff will help you to complete an application to transfer to us. At this stage, it's important to let your current agency know about your intention to transfer, but don't worry, this is not a formal resignation, only a means of making sure everyone involved in the care of your foster child is aware of what's going on. The transfer does not become official until step 7.



Step 4: Assessment

The staff at Clifford House will then assess your application and complete a series of home visits, in a similar way to when you first applied to foster. They will create a Form F document which will be presented to a panel at a later date. This may take several weeks.



Step 5: Panel

Once the assessment is completed, your application will be considered by a panel. The panel is similar to what you will have encountered during your initial application to foster, but is much less nerve-racking! The panel will review your application and assessment, and make a recommendation regarding your approval.



Step 6: The Agency Decision

The panel will then share their recommendation with our Agency Decision Maker here at Clifford House. Once agreed, this is your approval to transfer.



Step 7: Transfer

It's now time to hand in a formal resignation to your current fostering provider. Following your notice period, you will automatically be registered with Clifford House, and can enjoy all of the benefits of being part of our warm and welcoming fostering agency!



Join the Clifford House Family

If you choose to transfer to our localised agency, you will be joining a fostering agency which really takes the time to get to know you and your family and goes the extra mile to ensure that you have everything you need. Our quality support, great financial benefits, expert training and a matching process designed to match you with the children who you can help most sets us apart from other agencies.

We would love to welcome you into our vibrant community of foster carers and dedicated professionals.



Contact us Today

To talk to us about transferring today, give us a call on **0800 369 8515**.

Alternatively, you can fill in our **online contact form**.

If you decide to get in touch with our team, our dedicated recruitment officer will get back to you promptly for a friendly, informal and confidential chat, with no pressure to take things any further. They'll offer open and honest advice about the transferring process and will help support you on your journey if you decide if our friendly fostering agency today is the right fit for you and your family.

If you're ready to become a part of a fostering agency which values community and which offers support tailored to the wellbeing of your family and the children in your care, we would love to welcome you here at Clifford House!

clifford house fostering



Contact us

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www.cliffordhousefostering.com