**Job Role**

Post Title: Specialist/Foster Carer

Directorate: Peoples Services

Department: Children’s Social Care

**Specialist Foster Care Roles - receive up to £1000 per week**

St Helens Specialist Fostering Scheme has been developed to care for our children with complex needs who have had adverse childhood experiences from trauma or difficult childhood experiences.

For these children, we need special people who can provide stable and supportive homes, who can build positive relationships that help grow trust, help a child feel understood, heard, and help them to begin to make sense of their past experiences.

Our Specialist Foster Carers have experience of working with children or teenagers and understand how past trauma can manifest itself in behaviours that others might find difficult. Our Specialist Foster Carers are well supported and are part of a child's network, working in partnership with other professionals and have 24/7 support from professionals and specialists.

Please note this role requires children to live with you in your own home. You must have –

* A spare bedroom
* UK citizenship or Indefinite Leave to Remain
* Be age 21 or over
* Have experience of working with children in a professional capacity
* One carer must be available for the child full time and have no other work commitments

**Purpose:**

* St Helens Specialist Fostering Scheme has been developed to care for our children with complex needs who have had adverse childhood experiences from trauma or difficult childhood experiences. Children who require Specialist Foster Carer’s are children in residential care, children who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum, parent and child placements and children with significant complex needs.
* For these children, we need special people who can provide stable and supportive homes, who can build positive relationships that help grow trust, help a child feel understood, heard, and help them to begin to make sense of their past experiences.
* Our Specialist Foster Carers have experience of working with children or teenagers and understand how past trauma can manifest itself in behaviours that others might find difficult.
* Our Specialist Foster Carers are well supported and are part of a child's network, working in partnership with other professionals and have 24/7 support from professionals and specialists.
* Specialist Foster Carer (s) can provide full time or respite care.

**As a Specialist Foster Carer, we ask that you:**

* Are caring, child-centred and can act as a champion for the child or young person who comes into your care.
* Have 'stickability' - providing unconditional stability and encouragement to a young person, even whilst challenging unacceptable behaviour if needed.
* Can provide support if there are challenges engaging with education.
* Are available full time to care for the child or young person who comes into your care.
* Feel excited about working therapeutically, learning new approaches and being able to make a difference to a child's life.
* To promote an understanding of differences in race, culture, language and religion and a respect for those differences
* To understand the legal requirements and fostering regulations
* To work with social workers and other agencies as required, including participation in multi-professional meetings.
* To provide information, in writing or verbally, to social workers and other agencies as required, and to maintain a record of significant events.
* To maintain a positive and professional relationship with a child’s family, including working with agreed contact arrangements
* To be involved in a mutual support network with other foster carers, as appropriate
* To have significant and relevant previous experience of caring for children and young people with attachment and pain-based behaviour. To view them positively and be able to acknowledge and promote signature strengths.
* To be able to work in a strengths-based way including using behavioural strategies and positive parenting strategies.
* To have experience and understanding of the rationale of early intervention techniques to prevent situations escalating.
* To have the ability to self-reflect on interventions and strategies, be open to constructive feedback and to alternative ways of working.
* To be confident to adapt your parenting approach to support the individual child's emotional and developmental needs.
* To be committed to your personal development as a foster carer and undertake training in line with the programme requirements and to support your understanding of the needs of the child in your care.

**What are the expectations of a Specialist/c Foster Carer**

* The foster carer will be an integral part of the multi agency team and will engage in regular meetings for the child and to review the plan.
* They will be committed to the child's individualised care plan.
* They will monitor the child's behaviour and progress and commit to provide regular updates.
* The carer will support the child to attend therapy and any skills coach sessions identified.
* The carer will work with the child's social worker and the team to support a child who may be excluded from school.
* They will assist in the training and support of new carers.
* For couples, a commitment from both carers to attend training to develop skills and knowledge and maintain consistency is expected.

**Allowance**

Specialist foster carers will be expected to include one non-working carer and to hold demonstrable skills and experience. In addition to the basic age related allowance, they will receive fee based on level 3 payments and an additional allowance of £400. This payment is made on the basis that the children and young people placed with them will have been assessed as harder to place and may include those children and young people previously in residential care.

**Relationships**

Key internal and external contacts

Within the organisation

* Foster Care Team
* Children’s Social Care

At a borough level

* School
* Health

**Generic responsibilities**

**These are standard responsibilities to be included in all job descriptions to ensure consistency across the Council**

* To contribute to ensuring the function’s business targets are met, in accordance with best practice, to agreed specification, and with full compliance with health, safety, professional standards, statutory and other relevant legislation.
* To work collaboratively with Council colleagues as and when required.
* To behave in accordance with St Helens accountabilities framework and the Council’s Code of Conduct a fundamental aspect of which is the “Seven Principles of Public Life”.
* To comply with the Council’s Policy Framework.
* To undertake training and development as required.

**The details contained within this description reflect the content of the role at the date it was prepared. However, it is inevitable that over time, the nature of the role may change. Existing duties may no longer be required and other duties may be gained without changing the general nature of the role or the level of responsibility entailed. Consequently, the Council will expect to revise this description from time to time and will consult the holder/s at the appropriate time.**

**Date Prepared: 25 April 2024**