

**ascent
fostering
agency**

Ascent Fostering believes in children and young people. We were formed in 2013 with the commitment to provide the best care and support for young people who need foster care.

We have built a creative team of professionals who bring their diversity and experience to the care of children. We want you to join the journey and foster for Ascent.

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'We believe that children and young people can and will succeed in life with the right support, nurturing and guidance.'

Our Mission

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We pursue a culture of excellence in all we do

- We measure ourselves against challenging targets
- We challenge our approach to continuously improve
- We bring excellence into all areas of our communications with statutory partners, other agencies and the public
- We seek external verification from the Fostering panel and external partners to demonstrate the quality of our work to young people

Our team feel valued and are developing their skills

- We invest in professional development of staff
- Our team understand the vision of the business
- Everyone has a voice in the organisation
- We create a fun place to work
- We respect people as mature individuals and encourage work life balance

OUR VALUES

Supporting our carers is at the heart of the organisation

- Young people are listened to and actions are taken'
- Therapeutic Model
- All young people are offered access to a wide range of activities
- Young people are offered 1:1 mentoring with a trained mentor
- We encourage therapeutic assessment for all young people with therapeutic support offered as appropriate

We go over and above for our provision for young people

- We communicate clearly with carers treating them as valued professionals
- Our carers all access an extensive monthly training programme
- Carers have a voice and their feedback shapes decisions
- The organisation support carers through promoting their well-being
- We offer a strong financial support package to carers to allow them to focus on the children

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WHAT IS FOSTERING?

Simply put, fostering is looking after someone else's child whilst social services work with the family to resolve the issues that has led the young person to be taken into care.

In the UK children enter the care system every day. This can be for a day, a week or for years. Foster carers support children and young people at the most difficult time of their lives.

The reasons children come into care are complex and varied. It could be because a parent is unable to cope, or due to issues of neglect or abuse. Whatever the circumstances, children need to be looked after by families who are sensitive and non-judgemental.

During this initial period social services investigate and try their best to resolve the issues facing families. Understandably children are often hurt, angry and confused by the situation and they require a lot of reassurance and support.

We require families who can work with children who are unhappy or upset and are able to help them make sense of their situation.

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'The best foster carers are often people who can walk a few steps in somebody else's shoes and have understanding, empathy and a willingness to learn.'

Mark Pomell, Managing Director

Traumatised children need parents and carers who parent them intentionally, unafraid to face into their hurt, confusion, sadness and anger that often result from family separation, loss and early life trauma. At Ascent Fostering we train our carers to journey with these young people as they process and sometimes act out their hurt.

Intentional parenting is a term we have coined to identify the behaviours and parenting style we need from our foster carers. Our response must be empathetic and proactive in how we support children. The onus is on us as adults to respond to unmet needs of children in a positive way. This can sometimes be challenging to a carer as their own personal style of parenting in itself is not enough to meet the needs of traumatised children.

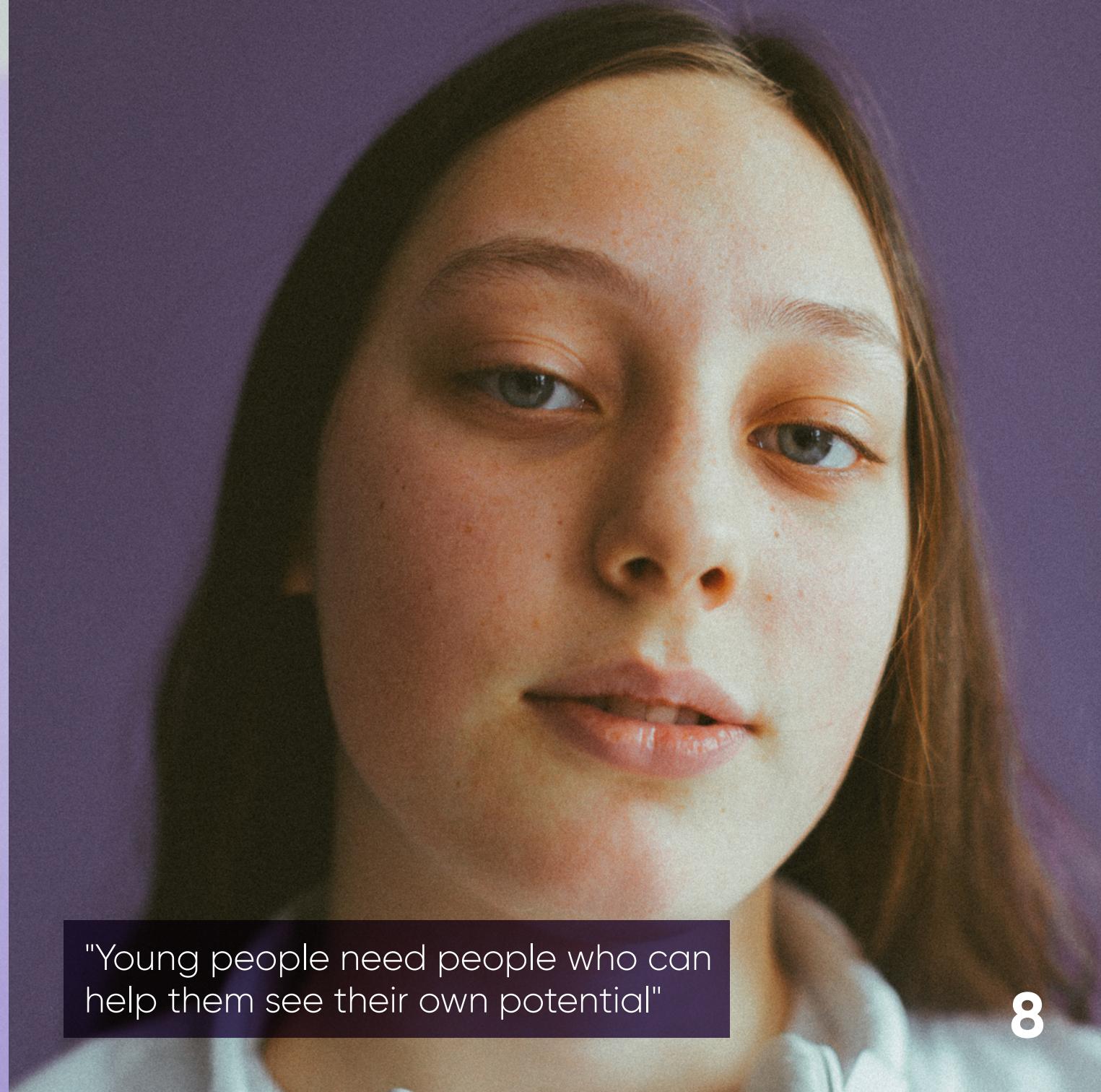
We believe that foster carers need to act intentionally in their interactions with vulnerable children. To nurture, affirm, love and provide safety and challenge that attempts to bridge the deficits of their previous parental experiences.



WHY FOSTER?

Fostering will give you the opportunity to assist vulnerable children and help them through difficult life circumstances. Fostering is not right for everyone and you need the time and space to commit to a young person.

From a personal and emotional point of view, it can be extremely fulfilling to see a young person stabilise, grow and develop in your care. Without doubt it can be one of the most rewarding and life-changing things you will ever do.



"Young people need people who can help them see their own potential"

THE ROLE OF A FOSTER CARER.

Different children require different types of care and it is part of a foster carer's role to be sensitive to the particular needs of the child they look after.

A younger child will demand a lot of practical, hands-on attention and possibly high contact levels with their birth family. A teenager, however, may benefit more if you take the role of a mentor, guiding and preparing them for independence.

You will be asked to look after children and young people who may have had traumatic life experiences. They can manifest their trauma in different and sometimes demanding ways. We need resilient people who can work alongside our professional team to help these children.

At Ascent Fostering we offer you training, support and professional advice to help you meet the needs of young people. All Ascent foster carers are required to complete a Therapeutic Fostering Course and commit to ongoing training, and we offer each young person additional support via mentoring as appropriate.



Your role as a foster carer could include simple things like ensuring the children you look after eat properly, getting them to school on time, as well as helping them develop routines and social skills. In turn, you can start to build their confidence and self-esteem in small steps.

You could find yourself taking them to football club or dance classes, dropping them off to see friends or going shopping together, so you also need to be relatively fit and active to be a foster carer.

As there are more teenagers than young children in care we do expect our foster carers to be flexible and open to accepting children from a broad age range and circumstances. However, foster carers do have a choice and we will work with you to understand what age, gender, background or child's needs will best suit you as a foster carer.



SUPPORT PLUS.

We are seeking families who are able to work with young people who need additional support and guidance. Often these young people have had several placement break downs, and have had difficulties in education. They need to know that they will be looked after by consistent, caring, mature and committed carers. We will give you an enhanced fee and the professional help and guidance to support you in meeting the child's needs. Do you have any additional skills, such as a background in social care, education or nursing that might prove useful in your role as a foster carer?



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"We want families who are committed to supporting young people on their journey"

Mark Hobbs, Registered individual

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COULD YOU BE A FOSTER CARER?

There are a lot of myths surrounding what is required to be a foster carer. You can become a foster carer if you have sufficient understanding and empathy for children. You can foster:

- if you have your own children or not
- if you are single, married or living with a partner
- if you are in or out of work
- whether you live in your own home or rent
- whatever your age, race, or religion

You also don't need any formal qualifications or training as we provide this. However, we need foster carers who are professional in their approach to their role. More and more, fostering is being seen as a career and part of the childcare work force.

QUESTIONS

Here are some questions you might like to ask yourself:

- Is this a good time in your life for a new challenge?
- Do you have a spare room in a warm and welcoming home?
- Is your home presentable?
- If you're in a relationship, is it strong enough to cope with another person in your lives?
- Do other family members want to welcome a foster child into their home?
- If you're single, could you cope with the lifestyle changes and loss of privacy?
- Would you be able to cope when a much-loved child has to move on?
- How would you manage if a child or young person placed in your home had difficult or unsociable behaviour?
- Would you be willing to oversee contact with the child or young person's natural family?



REWARDS AND BENEFITS?

As well as the many emotional rewards offered by fostering, the role you perform also comes with financial benefits.

- As an Ascent Fostering foster carer you will receive a weekly fee
- Foster carers in the UK enjoy extra tax benefits which we can discuss with you
- Every carer is given 3 weeks of paid respite each year
- Every child in placement receives a Holiday Grant from us of £500 per year
- We may also offer extra payments and benefits based on the needs of each individual child
- We pay an incentive to carers who recommend friends who become foster carers
- Foster carers will benefit from a company incentive scheme and earn a bonus

Ascent Fostering will also arrange a number of fun events for our carers and children across the year.

STEPS TO BECOMING A FOSTER CARER

All applicants are assessed to see whether they have the right skills and abilities to foster. The assessment process takes up to four months from start to finish and all your questions and concerns will be discussed in depth.

- 1** After an initial discussion over the phone we gather some basic information to help start assessing your suitability and what type of fostering might best suit you.
- 2** A member of the team will visit you at home to discuss fostering in more detail, and look at the space you have available for a foster child. We can also answer any questions you may have.

- 3** If we both agree that the assessment should proceed, the social worker will complete an application and you will embark on a comprehensive assessment. The assessment explores your background, experiences, parenting skills and the qualities you will bring to fostering.

Together with the social worker you will provide evidence of your ability to care for children or young people. The assessment will also involve talking to your children, any adult children who have left home and ex-partners where applicable. We will complete reference checks via your local authority, and ask you to provide three personal referees

- 4** You will also be invited to attend a three-day preparation course for prospective foster carers which is part of the assessment. This training will cover a variety of topics in order to prepare you for the fostering task. Other checks, such as DBS (Disclosure and barring service) and health assessments will also be undertaken.

- 5** The fostering panel is a group of lay people and professionals who will consider the assessment and make the decision on whether you will be approved as a foster carer. Once you are approved we will match you to the most suitable child/children for you.

EXISTING FOSTER CARERS

If you are already an approved foster carer who wants to join an agency that will support you and your development as a carer, please contact us. If you have children in placement you will still be able to join and you should still be able to transfer with your children.

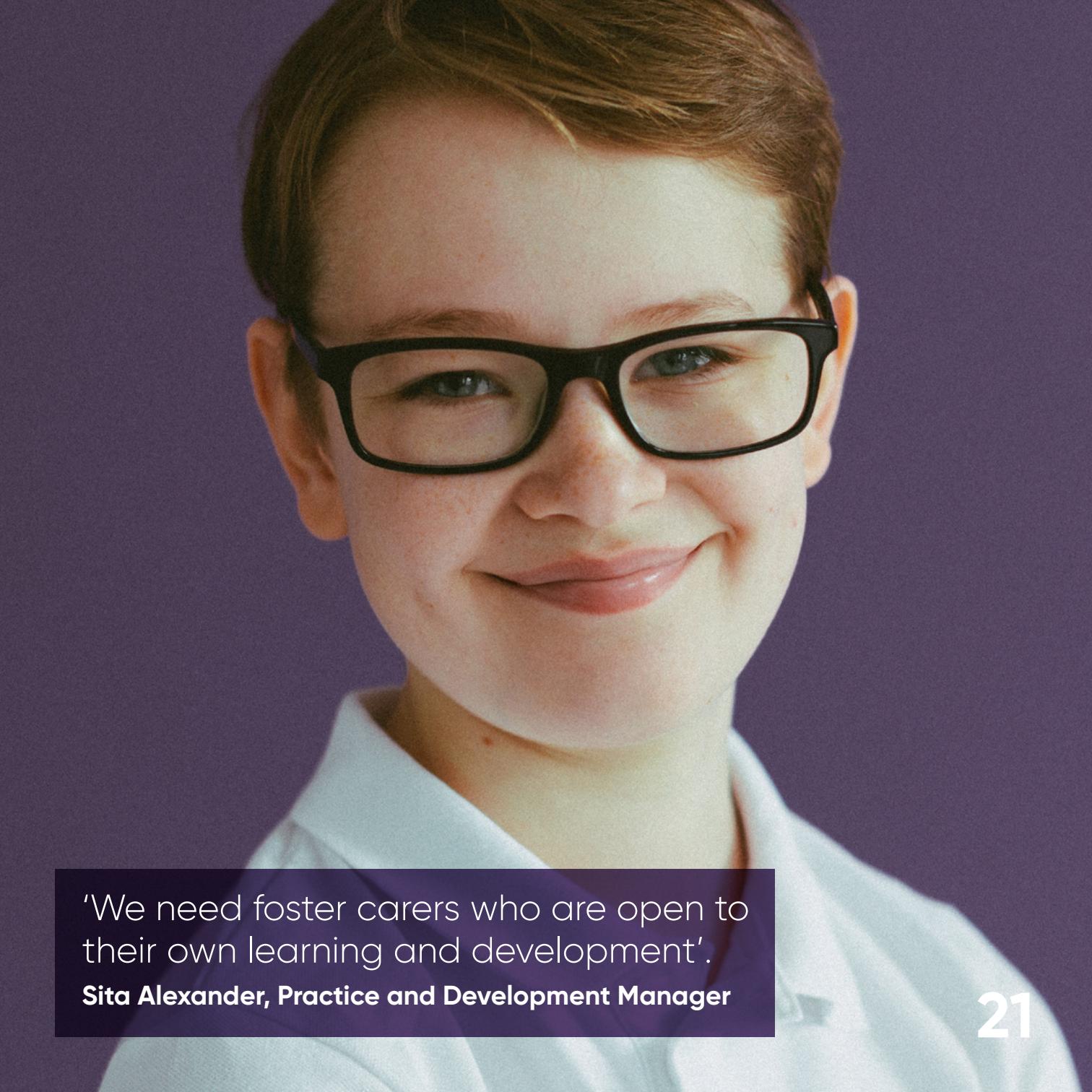
If you'd like to take the next step please call:

020 3757 0070

One of our team can discuss your interest with you, or email us at **hello@ascentfostering.com**

Or visit our website at **www.ascentfostering.com** to complete an online enquiry form.

We hope you will join us on the journey and foster for Ascent!

A close-up portrait of a young woman with short brown hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a white collared shirt. She is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a dark, textured purple.

'We need foster carers who are open to their own learning and development'.

Sita Alexander, Practice and Development Manager

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