

Debate Pack

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General debate on the recruitment and retention of foster carers

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1

Overview

Foster care has been described as “the bedrock of the care system.”¹ As at 31 March 2021, 71% of looked after children were placed in a foster placement:

- 15% were placed in a foster placement with a relative or friend, up from 14% in 2020 and 13% in 2018.
- 56% were placed in foster placements with another carer (not a relative or friend), down from 57% in 2020 and 60% in 2018.²

Local authorities in England are under a general duty to secure sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of looked after children in their area. As part of this, authorities must have regard to the benefit of having sufficient accommodation providers in their area capable of meeting different needs, including foster carers.³

1.1

Ofsted’s annual fostering statistics

[Ofsted’s latest annual fostering statistics](#) show that as at 31 March 2021, there were 45,370 fostering households and 76,640 foster carers in England, an increase of 4% since 2015. While the number of foster carers in England is at its highest ever level, however, Ofsted said this is not sufficient to meet demand:

The numbers of fostering households and foster carers in England are at their highest ever levels. Despite this, the increase in the overall number of households and carers has been slow at a time when the number of children in care is at its highest level in England...

Over the last 7 years, the general trend has been of a slow increase in numbers of places, with a 9% increase since March 2015. However, this increase has not kept up with the demand for places, with the number of children in foster care having increased by around 11% over the period to March 2020.⁴

Although there are more approved places than children in foster care, the report added, “this does not mean that there are sufficient appropriate placements for children.”⁵

The statistics also showed:

¹ The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care, [The Case for Change \(PDF\)](#), June 2021, p60.

² Department for Education, [Children looked after in England including adoptions](#), 18 November 2021.

³ [Children Act 1989, section 22G; PQ 90463 \[Foster Care\]](#), 17 December 2021.

⁴ Ofsted, [Fostering in England 2020 to 2021: main findings](#), 11 November 2021.

⁵ Ofsted, [Fostering in England 2020 to 2021: main findings](#), 11 November 2021.

- There were 160,635 initial enquiries from prospective fostering households in the year ending 31 March 2021, but only 10,145 (6%) foster carer applications were received. This proportion has decreased from 12% in 2014 to 2015.
- While the number of initial enquiries is at an all-time high, the conversion rate of enquiries to applications is at an all-time low. Applications have decreased by 20% since 2014 to 2015.
- During 2020 to 2021, 32% of fostering applications from prospective households were approved. This is a decrease from 2015 to 2016, when 44% of applications were approved.
- In the year ending 31 March 2021, the number of newly approved fostering households was higher than the number of deregistered households.⁶
- 30% of deregistered fostering households (1,470) deregistered within two years of their approval.⁷

In a [press release published alongside the statistics](#), Ofsted said a “continued lack of capacity in the foster care sector is leading to vulnerable people missing out on the care and support they need.” It added:

As the number of children in care continues to grow, matching them with the right carers becomes increasingly difficult. This makes it more likely that very vulnerable children will face placement breakdowns and further disruption to their lives.⁸

1.2

Competition and Markets Authority’s study of children’s social care

On 10 March 2022, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) published the [final report of its study of the children’s social care market](#).

The report noted that recruitment of new foster carers is a challenge in England, Scotland and Wales and that the difficulty is greatest for carers needed to look after children with more challenging needs. The “degree of challenge...varies geographically”, it added, with more difficulty in rural areas, and in London and the South East.

While noting uncertainty around future demand for foster carers, the report highlighted the potential for greater challenges if demand continues to grow:

⁶ Statistics on retention exclude family and friends households.

⁷ Ofsted, [Fostering in England 2020 to 2021: main findings](#), 11 November 2021.

⁸ Ofsted, [Ofsted: Lack of foster carers mean children missing out on support](#), 11 November 2021.

There is uncertainty around how demand for foster carers will develop in the future and so how many foster carers will need to be recruited. If in the future demand for foster carers continues to grow the challenge will become greater. There are widespread concerns that growing demand will mean that there will not be enough foster carers in the future. A report published in 2021 by the Social Market Foundation [see section 1.4 below] projects that based on current trends there will be a deficit in recruitment of around 25,000 foster care families in England over the next five years. However, it is not clear that the current trend of increasing use of fostering will continue (although it has since at least 1994).⁹

Barriers to the recruitment and retention of foster carers

The report said there are a number of reasons why recruiting foster carers is challenging, with the main barrier highlighted by providers as “identifying and encouraging the limited pool of people who are willing and able to be a foster carer.” The report added:

- Despite increasing budgets for marketing and recruitment, the quality of applications does not always increase.
- Not everyone who wants to be a foster carer has the resources, including a spare room, financial stability and time, or the personal skills to be eligible.
- The detailed recruitment process for foster carers was “not generally considered an undue barrier to recruitment”. The process was seen by local authorities and independent fostering agencies “as necessary to ensure that only the right applicants became foster carers.”

Regarding retention, the report said foster carers choose to deregister for a range of reasons, and local authorities report an ageing population of foster carers and a falling average length of service. It added:

Polling of former foster carers from the Social Market Foundation [see section 1.4] found age to be the most common reason for foster carers aged over 55 to deregister, with 61% of this group feeling that they were now too old to foster...

Overall, the factors found by the Social Market Foundation to be contributing to giving up fostering were varied with the most common factor, receiving too little training and/or support, being cited by just 21% of all respondents and one in three of those aged between 18 and 54. Other key reasons mentioned were: not receiving enough respite; not being able to afford it; not receiving enough placements; and being unable to meet children’s needs.¹⁰

⁹ Competition and Markets Authority, [Children’s social care market study: Final report \(PDF\)](#), March 2022, pp106-107.

¹⁰ Competition and Markets Authority, [Children’s social care market study: Final report \(PDF\)](#), March 2022, pp106-107.

Improving recruitment and retention

The report highlighted several proposals for national action to improve recruitment and retention of foster carers, but said views on their potential impact are mixed. For example:

- Providing professional status for foster carers, for example through a qualification, is seen as a way of increasing the status of foster carers and increasing their status. However, some fear that professionalisation could put some potential foster carers off.
- Increasing allowances for foster carers could ease some of the financial pressures. However, the challenge of recruiting foster carers goes beyond money.
- Some argue that making foster carers employees rather than self-employed would provide more employment rights. However, others argue this will make them worse off as they will lose tax benefits.
- Creating a national register of foster carers would make foster care registrations portable, meaning foster carers would only have to go through the assessment process once. However, some stakeholders suggest that a national register would not be beneficial as fostering placements are sought locally,
- A national awareness campaign could attract more people into the field. However, some providers report that recruitment is most successful at a local level and it is not clear whether a national campaign would be the best use of resources.

The CMA said it had “not seen evidence which makes clear...which approach would be most successful at solving problems with recruitment and retention or whether a combination of these options would be the most effective way forward.” It added, however, that “it is clear that there are problems with recruitment and retention of foster carers, which cannot be solved at local authority or [independent fostering agency] level”. It also noted that previous reviews, such as the Narey Review (see below), had recommended solutions which have not been implemented.

The report said the Welsh Government has “supported clear national action to address the problem by introducing [Foster Wales](#)” (a network of local authority fostering services across Wales). “What appears to be lacking in England and Scotland”, the report said, “is a common understanding of the problem and national leadership to take forward appropriate solutions.”

The report recommended national governments should conduct an annual assessment of the likely future need for foster carers and should then “take

the lead implementing an effective strategy to improve recruitment and retention of foster carers where there is a need for more foster carers.”¹¹

The Government has said it welcomes the CMA’s report and has committed to respond to it within 90 days.¹²

1.3

Fostering Network State of the Nation Report

Every three years, the Fostering Network conducts a State of the Nation survey with the aim of understanding the state of fostering in the UK. The report of the most recent survey, published in December 2021, is available at: [State of the Nation's Foster Care 2021](#).

Recruitment of foster carers

All but six of the fostering services surveyed reported having a shortage of foster carers to meet the needs of children in their local population. The highest areas of need were for teenagers, large sibling groups, children with disabilities and parent and child placements.

Fostering services highlighted a number of factors preventing suitable applicants from enquiring to foster:

- People are put off by the process.
- There is a lack of regular or guaranteed income (fee payment).
- People are put off by myths around fostering.
- People do not have a spare bedroom.

When fostering services were asked what they thought would improve the assessment and approval of foster carers, key themes included:

- wider support and awareness from partner agencies (health and criminal record checks etc.) about the need for information to avoid delays in the recruitment process
- better transfer processes for people who have already been approved to foster
- more staff to complete assessments in a timely manner

¹¹ Competition and Markets Authority, [Children’s social care market study: Final report \(PDF\)](#), March 2022, pp110-112.

¹² [PQ135618 \[Children: Care Homes\], 15 March 2022](#).

- general awareness raising of the role of a foster carer involving open and transparent conversation to ensure appropriate applicants have clearer expectations
- better pre-approval training and for this to happen before assessment or during assessment.

The report recommended governments should introduce a national register of foster carers, which, it argued, would improve the portability of the workforce.¹³

Retention of foster carers

When asked what they thought is the most effective thing they do which helps retain foster carers, fostering services highlighted:

- the support provided by social workers
- valuing the contribution foster carers make to a child's life and having good relationships with the team around the child
- providing fee payments and sufficient allowances to cover the cost of looking after a child
- learning and development opportunities.

Fostering services said they could improve retention by providing better support, including psychological support and out of hours support, better pay, and greater consistency of social workers.¹⁴

1.4

Social Market Foundation report

In August 2021, the Social Market Foundation published the second report in a series on reforming the foster care system: [Fostering the future: Recruiting and retaining more foster carers](#).

The report estimated that 63,000 new foster care families will need to be recruited over the next five years to replace those leaving the system and to meet the needs of children requiring foster care, but current trends would deliver fewer than 40,000 new families.

Based on polling with people who stopped providing foster care placements, the report highlighted several reasons that contribute to why foster carers deregister, including:

¹³ The Fostering Network, [State of the Nation's Foster Care 2021 Report](#), December 2021, p26.

¹⁴ The Fostering Network, [State of the Nation's Foster Care 2021 Report](#), December 2021, p27.

- Receiving too little support or training
- Not receiving enough respite
- Not being able to afford it
- Not receiving enough placements
- Being unable to meet the child's needs

Based on polling aimed at understanding the motivations of prospective foster carers and the reasons why they do not take their interest forward, the report made a number of recommendations, including:

- A Foster Carers' Charter, with nationally agreed minimum standards, so that carers are clear about their rights and responsibilities.
- A right to access respite care, training and support.
- Explore the range of possible options regarding foster carer pay. The report said the most promising option is to pay carers a baseline "retainer" irrespective of whether they have a child in their care.
- Increasing the recruitment of flexible foster carers.
- The Government should work with the sector to develop a nationally coordinated recruitment drive.¹⁵

1.5

Policy development

Independent Review of Fostering (2018)

An [independent report on foster care in England for the Department of Education](#), led by Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, was published in February 2018.

While it is often said there is a very large shortage of foster carers, the report said, in fact "there is not an absolute shortage" and the "overwhelming majority of children who need to be fostered are quickly found placements." The shortages, it said, are "down to geography or the availability of carers who can look after more challenging children. This means that, too often, matches are made between carers and children that are not ideal and, after a short period, the child has to be moved again."

¹⁵ Social Market Foundation, [Fostering the Future: Paper 2 – Recruiting and retaining more foster carers](#), August 2021, pp5-11.

The report said there was merit in developing a national register of foster carers “so that matching can be informed by up to date information about carers’ experience, skills and availability.” It also said better arrangements were needed to encourage those who enquire about foster care to apply. Many local authorities and independent fostering agencies may not be as good at this as they believe, the report added.

The report said it “had not seen evidence to justify” the argument that the retention of fosters carers was a “grave problem.” The report did say, however, that more needed to be known about why carers leave before retirement and recommended more foster carers should be invited to exit interviews.¹⁶

Government response

The Government’s response to the review, [Fostering better outcomes](#), was published in July 2018.

On the recommendation for a national register of foster carers, the response said the scale of appetite for national infrastructure had been mixed. It did, however, set out plans to “explore whether technology can help improve the quality and consistency of data on foster parents, to inform recruitment, planning and vacancy management.”

The response said the Government had heard mixed views on the benefits of a national recruitment campaign, as “local needs should drive recruitment activity.” It did, however, encourage local authorities and independent fostering agencies to consider joint recruitment efforts.¹⁷

Further information on actions taken in response to the report was provided in [response to a parliamentary question in July 2020](#).¹⁸

Independent Review of Children’s Social Care

In its [manifesto for the 2019 general election](#), the Conservative Party said it would “review the care system to make sure that all care placements and settings are providing children and young adults with the support they need.”¹⁹

Following delays as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, the review was launched on 15 January 2021.²⁰ The review’s terms of reference set out that it will look at the whole care system, including children in fostering

¹⁶ Department for Education, [Foster care in England: A Review for the Department for Education by Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers](#), February 2018, pp49-57.

¹⁷ Department for Education, [Fostering Better Outcomes](#), July 2018, pp30 & 49.

¹⁸ [PQH16329 \[Foster Care\]](#), 14 July 2020.

¹⁹ Conservative Party, [Get Brexit Done: Unleash Britain’s Potential](#), p14.

²⁰ DfE, [Education Secretary launches review of children’s social care](#), 15 January 2021; [PQ125246](#), 4 December 2020.

arrangements. They add that the review will build on reviews into component parts of the system over the last decade, including in fostering.²¹

On 17 June 2021, the Care Review published its first report, [The Case for Change \(PDF\)](#), setting out what the review had identified as the biggest problems in children’s social care.

The report noted that while initial interest in fostering enquiries continue to grow, applications are reducing. This, the report said, “raise[s] serious questions about the fitness of our current approach to recruiting prospective foster carers” which is “concerning given the ageing profile of foster carers.” The report added: “We need to ensure we have enough good quality carers of all ages to meet the needs of children, particularly for those children who do need to stay in care long term.”²²

The review intends to explore the issues identified in the Case for Change report in more depth ahead of its final recommendations.²³ The review expects to publish its final report in the spring.²⁴

Government’s position

A [parliamentary question in December 2021](#) asked the Government what assessment it had made of the effectiveness of foster placements and what steps it plans to take to recruit and train more foster carers. In response, Will Quince, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Education, said:

The government is committed to ensuring that children and young people in the care system have the best possible outcomes. Foster carers play an essential role in this by providing stable, loving homes for some of our most vulnerable children.

The department continues to prioritise supporting local authorities and foster carers to provide stable and loving foster homes. The department is investing in different approaches to help local authorities provide additional foster care places, including trialling different ways to plan and commission placements.

Local authorities have a duty to ensure they have sufficient placements to meet the needs of the looked after children in their area, this includes parent and child foster placements.

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, clearly set out the expectation that support and training is made available to foster carers to assist them in meeting the specific needs of the children they are caring for or are expected to care for. This would include ensuring that foster carers have the knowledge and skills

²¹ DfE, [Terms of reference for the independent review of children’s social care: a bold and broad approach to support a fundamental review of children’s experiences](#).

²² The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care, [The Case for Change](#), 17 June 2021, p60.

²³ The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care, [The Case for Change](#), 17 June 2021, p6.

²⁴ The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care, [Building recommendations](#), 27 January 2022.

required to support looked after children in a parent and child foster placement.

When arrangements are made for a parent and child to live together with foster parents the placing authority and the fostering service are responsible for any additional support and training that their foster carers may need.²⁵

In [response to a further parliamentary question in March 2022](#), the Minister set out what the Government was doing to help aid the recruitment of foster carers:

...the department has invested in different approaches to help councils provide the right kind of foster care places. This includes using digital tools to improve information sharing, matching and placement processes. The department has also funded seven local authority-led partnerships to test new approaches to collaborative commissioning and sufficiency planning for fostering placements. In addition, the department is working collaboratively with the residential childcare sector to identify ways to support it to promote careers in the sector, and how it can raise the profile of these roles locally.²⁶

²⁵ [PQ90463 \[Foster Care\]](#), 17 December 2021.

²⁶ [PQ136642. \[Adoption Support Fund\]](#), 16 March 2022.

2

Parliamentary Material

2.1

Parliamentary Questions

Adoption Support Fund

16 Mar 2022 | 136642

Asked by: Mike Amesbury

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to extend the Adoption Support Fund to aid the recruitment and retention of foster carers and the children's home workforce.

Answering member: Will Quince | Department: Department for Education (DfE)

The adoption support fund (ASF) was developed to provide vital therapeutic interventions for children that have left the care system through adoption or special guardianship orders. The ASF does not provide funding for any type of recruitment activity.

However, the department has invested in different approaches to help councils provide the right kind of foster care places. This includes using digital tools to improve information sharing, matching and placement processes. The department has also funded seven local authority-led partnerships to test new approaches to collaborative commissioning and sufficiency planning for fostering placements. In addition, the department is working collaboratively with the residential childcare sector to identify ways to support it to promote careers in the sector, and how it can raise the profile of these roles locally.

Children: Care Homes

15 Mar 2022 | 135618

Asked by: Stephen Morgan

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the Government's timeframe is for implementing the recommendations of the forthcoming investigation by the Competition and Markets Authority into children's residential care.

Answering member: Will Quince | Department: DfE

In March 2021, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched a market study examining the lack of availability and increasing costs in children's social care provision, including children's homes and fostering agencies. The CMA examined concerns around high prices paid by local

authorities, and the inadequate supply of appropriate placements for children. Its interim report was published on 22 October 2021. Its full report, including recommendations, was published on 10 March 2022 here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-market-study-final-report>.

The department welcomes the report and is carefully considering the CMA's recommendations. At this point, the department is unable to comment on timeframes for implementation of the recommendations, until it has fully considered the findings contained in the final report. The department commits to responding to the report within 90 days.

Foster Care: Allowances

07 Mar 2022 | 132323

Asked by: Helen Hayes

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to review the level of national minimum allowances for foster carers.

Answering member: Will Quince | Department: DfE

The Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (NMS), issued under the Care Standards Act 2000, set out the expectations that are placed on foster parents and their agencies, and can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/192705/NMS_Fostering_Services.pdf. The department is clear that no one should be 'out of pocket' because of their fostering role and expect all foster parents to receive at least the national minimum allowance (NMA) plus any agreed expenses to cover the full cost of caring for each child placed with them (standard 28). Fostering agencies and local authorities are regulated/inspected by Ofsted who can assess compliance with the NMS as part of their inspection of providers.

The NMA was developed by calculating the cost of caring for a birth child and accounting for the additional cost of caring for a foster child. The current rates are valid until 6 April 2022. New rates for the 2022/23 financial year will be published shortly.

Foster carers also receive qualifying care relief that is made up of two parts: tax exemption on the first £10,000 shared equally among any foster carers in the same household, and tax relief for every week a child is in their care.

The payments and benefits foster carers receive to cover the costs of caring for a child were most recently reviewed as part of the Foster Care in England report, Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers's 2018 review of the fostering system in England. The report can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foster-care-in-england>. As set out in the government's response, Fostering Better Outcomes, the

department believes that the current tax and benefits arrangements offer the best support to foster parents. The response can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fostering-better-outcomes>. Foster parents have different statuses for tax and benefits purposes. This has consciously been done to ensure that they get the best support these systems can offer for their unique circumstances.

Children in Care: Travellers

02 Mar 2022 | 127550

Asked by: Fleur Anderson

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure children from Gypsy, Travelling and Roma communities are placed with families from their own communities if they are taken into care.

Answering member: Will Quince | Department: DfE

A child's background is an important consideration when placing a looked after child. This is evidenced in the law. When making a decision with respect to a looked after child (or one that they are proposing to look after), a local authority must (under s.22 (5) of the Children Act 1989) give due consideration to the child's religious persuasion, as well as their racial origin, cultural and linguistic background.

When it comes to placing a looked after child, the local authority must give preference to a placement with family or friends as foster carer. Where this is not possible, the local authority must place the child in the most appropriate available placement.

As part of this decision, the local authority must comply with several factors. These include enabling the child to live near their home and not disrupting their education unless this is not reasonably practicable. Whilst a child's background is important, local authorities have additional factors to consider to ensure the child's needs and best interests are met.

In relation to foster placements, regardless of whether a child is placed with a foster carer from their own religious, ethnic, cultural, or linguistic background, the Care Standards Act 2000 includes the National Minimum Standards for Fostering. These standards outline the necessity for care providers to ensure children are cared for in a way that ensures a positive self-view, emotional resilience, and knowledge and understanding of their background. This is also covered by reg 17 of The Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

The department has invested in behavioural insights research on fostering recruitment. This is done to test the ways we can support fostering service providers to attract carers able to meet the needs of looked after children

locally. This includes increasing numbers of diverse foster parents, notably Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic carers. This will be published in due course.

Foster Care

17 Dec 2021 | 90463

Asked by: Rachael Maskell

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of parent and child foster placements; and what steps he plans to take to recruit and train more foster carers in those fostering arrangements.

Answering member: Will Quince | Department: DfE

The government is committed to ensuring that children and young people in the care system have the best possible outcomes. Foster carers play an essential role in this by providing stable, loving homes for some of our most vulnerable children.

The department continues to prioritise supporting local authorities and foster carers to provide stable and loving foster homes. The department is investing in different approaches to help local authorities provide additional foster care places, including trialling different ways to plan and commission placements.

Local authorities have a duty to ensure they have sufficient placements to meet the needs of the looked after children in their area, this includes parent and child foster placements.

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, clearly set out the expectation that support and training is made available to foster carers to assist them in meeting the specific needs of the children they are caring for or are expected to care for. This would include ensuring that foster carers have the knowledge and skills required to support looked after children in a parent and child foster placement.

When arrangements are made for a parent and child to live together with foster parents the placing authority and the fostering service are responsible for any additional support and training that their foster carers may need.

Foster Care

14 Jul 2020 | HL6329

Asked by: Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to deal with the shortfall of people coming forward to be foster parents.

Answering member: Baroness Berridge | Department: DfE

It is vital that local authorities can find the right carers to meet the needs of vulnerable children. To help unlock fostering capacity during the COVID-19 outbreak, we have made amendments to the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. These changes aim to make it easier to identify potential placements, particularly in emergency situations, and so that new foster carers can be assessed and approved without unnecessary delay.

An independent review of foster care in England in 2017 highlighted that England does not have a shortage of foster carers overall but there are geographical gaps in provision, particularly for specific needs.

The department commissioned behavioural insights research which commenced in November 2019, to explore the barriers and motivations of prospective carers and seek recommendations for more targeted approaches in local recruitment. We will share these findings with fostering services and recruitment managers.

The department also recently funded 7 feasibility studies in commissioning and sufficiency planning, bringing together local authorities with their partners to explore innovative practices, including collaborative approaches to foster care recruitment. We are also exploring whether digital approaches could help us in supporting local authorities to improve matching of children to carers.

We have committed £125,000 from June to October to fund a new FosterlinePlus service, through which prospective foster families will be able to access the support and information they need to offer caring homes for some of our most vulnerable children.

We supported the Fostering Network's Foster Care Fortnight in May through social media channels. We also recently launched updated fostering pages to make information more accessible to potential carers, and they are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/becoming-foster-parent>.

3 Press Material

The following is a selection of news and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of external content.

3.1 Press Articles & Press Releases

[Thousands of children still denied the chance to be fostered by their grandparents](#)

The Sunday Times [subscription required]

9 January 2022

[Better relationships with children's social workers 'key to tackling foster carer crisis'](#)

Community Care

7 December 2021

['Neglected' fostering services face crisis in morale and funding, warns UK charity](#)

The Observer

5 December 2021

[Fostering shortfall will leave 95,000 children in care](#)

The Times [subscription required]

22 November 2021

[Ofsted: Lack of foster carers mean children missing out on support](#)

Ofsted

11 November 2021

[Vulnerable children at risk as England faces shortfall of 25,000 foster families](#)

The Observer

29 August 2021

['Why recognising foster carers as workers would provide more stability for children and reduce costs'](#)

Community Care

31 August 2021

[Children needing foster care 'to rise by 33%' leaving councils struggling to cope](#)

Inews

24 June 2021

[Number of children needing foster care soars during pandemic, says Barnardo's](#)

The Guardian

23 June 2020

4 Further reading

4.1 Committee Reports

[Fostering](#)

1st Report of Session 2017–19
House of Commons Education Committee
HC 340
22 December 2017

4.2 Reports

Ofsted, [Fostering in England 2020 to 2021: main findings](#), November 2021

The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care, [The Case for Change \(PDF\)](#), June 2021

Competition and Markets Authority, [Children’s social care market study: Final report \(PDF\)](#), March 2022

The Fostering Network, [State of the Nation’s Foster Care 2021 Report](#), December 2021,

Social Market Foundation, [Fostering the Future: Recruiting and retaining more foster carers](#), August 2021

Social Market Foundation, [Fostering the future: Helping local authorities to fulfil their legal duties](#), June 2021

Department for Education, [Fostering Better Outcomes](#), July 2018

Department for Education, [Foster care in England: A Review for the Department for Education by Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers](#), February 2018

4.3 Websites

[Becoming a foster parent GOV.UK](#)

[The Fostering Network](#)

[Foster Wales](#)

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