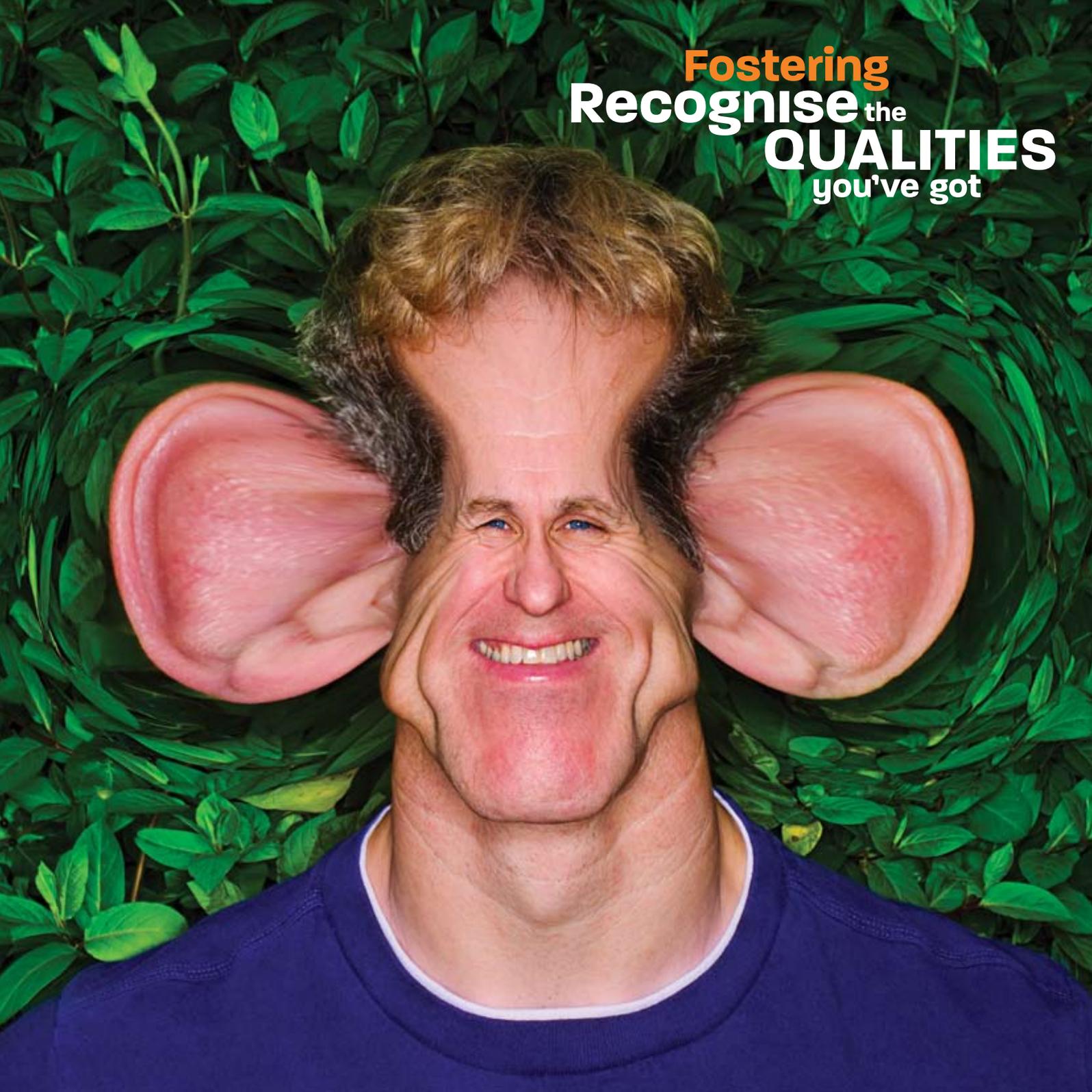


Fostering
Recognise the
QUALITIES
you've got



Hello



Thank you for taking an interest in fostering. This leaflet will help you to recognise the qualities you've

got that could help to improve a child's life.

It will also answer some of the questions you may have about what fostering is and what we would expect of you as a foster carer.

We hope this information gives you the reassurance you need to take the next step towards fostering - with excitement and confidence.

What is fostering?

At its simplest, fostering is taking care of someone else's child for a period of time while they are unable to live with their own family. The time a child needs foster care will vary depending on their circumstances, from a few days or weeks to many years. Whatever the timescales, foster care is about providing that child with a safe, stable, family environment for as long as they need it.

You might not realise this but fostering needn't be an all or nothing commitment. There are different types of fostering that you can specialise in. You'll probably find that the qualities you've got will make you naturally more suited to one type than another.

Who needs fostering?

There are a number of different reasons why children come into foster care. It could be a temporary solution while a family crisis is sorted out or their parents are finding it difficult to cope and need a helping hand. Some children may have experienced abuse, neglect or domestic violence. Whatever the reason it's through no fault of their own.

There is always a need to find foster carers for teenagers and where possible we try to keep brothers and sisters together. We also recognise the benefit to children of living with families who share their culture, language and religion.

What qualities do I need to become a foster carer?

This may surprise you, but you're probably more qualified to be a foster carer than you realise. Don't believe us? Then just consider the following questions.

Would you say you were a good listener? How about resilient?

Are you pretty thick-skinned? Can you diffuse situations with humour or make a child's worries disappear with a reassuring hug?

If any of these qualities remind you of you and if you're down to earth with a stable home life, you could provide the foundations on which a child can rebuild their life.

What support is available?

There's no denying it, becoming a foster carer is a massive responsibility.

That's why we make sure our foster carers receive support and encouragement.

As a foster carer you will have a social worker who will work with you to help you learn more as you develop your fostering career. They'll provide supervision and support and also suggest suitable training and development opportunities to complement and develop the qualities you've already got.

As well as learning skills to enhance the level of care you can offer, you'll also get the chance to gain qualifications.

Do I get paid?

All foster carers receive an allowance to cover the cost of looking after a child.

Most foster carers also receive a fee for their work depending on the type of fostering they do.





10 steps to becoming a foster carer

So now you know what becoming a foster carer entails, it's up to you to decide whether to step forward.

- 1** This is the only step that you must take alone. But once you have, you'll find support throughout the rest of the application process and beyond. That first step is to call us. We'll answer your queries and send you more information
- 2** We can then meet at an informal gathering with others also considering fostering or arrange to visit you at home.
- 3** You then confirm your intentions to foster by completing an application form.
- 4** You'll meet your social worker, who will carry out assessments on both you and the household.
- 5** You'll be invited to attend our 'Skills to Foster' training course.
- 6** From here we'll complete your assessment, which will include Criminal Records Bureau and thorough background checks.
- 7** Your social worker will then submit a full report to the fostering panel which will consider your suitability to foster.
- 8** This is where the fostering panel will recommend whether you get the thumbs up to become a foster carer.
- 9** You're now ready to foster. The next step is the most exciting one, the placement of your first child (or children).
- 10** This is less a step and more an ongoing journey. You will enjoy regular support, supervision and encouragement from your social worker and the rest of the fostering team.

What do I do now?

Being a foster carer is a huge decision, and one that shouldn't be rushed. Call us when you are ready and we'll be here to take each step with you. Together we will explore your qualities and skills and discuss which type of fostering would be ideal for you. We look forward to hearing from you.

