

Recruit

Description

Recruiting foster carers for Sparks Fostering

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Sparks Fostering offers up to £3,500 referral fee when a foster carer has fostered for 3 months (see www.SparksFostering.org/Refer). You may also become the linked support workers or social workers for the people you refer (see www.SparksFostering.org/Work for information about job roles). Indeed, particularly successful recruiters could build up their own hub, eventually becoming responsible individuals or registered managers.

Target demographics

When recruiting, you should keep in mind the demographics, or types of people who are likely to become foster carers. Most foster carers are over age 40 (they have experience of raising children, their children are old enough for them to take on more childcare responsibilities and they have a spare bedroom). Foster carers are also likely to be part of some form of community group, whether it's a place of worship, volunteers, part of sports activities or engaged in other community activities. They may also have worked with children, or be engaged in another form of service to improve the world

(e.g. charity work or animal rescue).



Headline messages

All recruitment messages must be focused on meeting the needs of vulnerable children. Even when we talk about referral fees, we justify the substantial fee by explaining that it's very challenging to find good quality foster carers, so we're giving fair remuneration for valuable work. The same applies to the fees paid to foster carers – we don't pay foster carers to care for children, we give a fee for the professional element of the role (meetings, training and paperwork).

Learn about fostering before you recruit

You don't need to know a great deal about fostering before you recruit because Sparks Fostering does thorough safeguarding checks and offers good training for fostering applicants. That said, you may wish to know enough to answer basic questions.

You should review the Sparks Fostering quiz (www.SparksFostering.org/Quiz) so that you are clear about the basic referral criteria for fostering applicants.

The Sparks Fostering website (www.SparksFostering.org) is the most comprehensive fostering website in the country – it provides the A to Z of foster care in a comprehensive, easy to read format. The information is also available in audio format (so you can listen to the information while carrying out other tasks).

Ideas for recruitment

1. Review your phone book

Send this digital flyer to the contacts in your phone book (via WhatsApp) – you may be surprised at how many people have already considered foster care, but weren't sure who to approach.

[Ahmed to add flyer that I've already requested].

A suggestion for a message that you may wish to share with the flyer is:

“Hi, I'm working with Sparks Fostering (www.SparksFostering.org) to recruit foster carers. You may know that there is a desperate shortage of foster carers, so I'm hoping that we can make a small difference by encouraging people to foster. Please share this message with your contacts and ask them to let me know if they might consider fostering. Many thanks, [Your name and your email address and/or phone number]”

2. Share with your own social media networks

Share the above digital flyer and message on your own social media (on your pages and via DMs). If you are particularly enthusiastic about social media recruitment, speak with Tay about how your profile can be built up so you have more followers.

Also, link with Sparks Fostering and Tay on social media to stay up to date with new material which you can share.

[Ahmed to add all social media links]

3. Use social media networks

If you would be willing to spend maybe 20 minutes a day (or every few days) to recruit on social media, ask Tay to book in a video call to take you through the strategy that you could use. It would involve forming connections with community groups via your social media profile.

4. Link with community groups

You could approach local and national organisations to ask if they would like to partner with yourself (and Sparks) to recruit foster carers. The arrangement would be that the partner would send a message to the people on their mailing list, add details about Sparks to their newsletter, do an announcement when there is a meeting or event, and/or put up a few posters in their provision. Some organisations (e.g. places of worship) may wish to host fostering awareness events – if this is the case, Tay can support with providing the necessary resources and support.

Organisations are incentivised to partner by sharing the referral fee. So, for example, if a charity sends an email to their staff team and a member of the charity team refers a successful fostering carer, the referral fee would be split as £2,000 for you as the recruiter, £750 for the organisation, and £750 for the staff member who made the referral.

5. Leaflet drops

Sparks Fostering arranges leaflet drops in the areas of current foster carers – so once you have made one successful referral, the leaflet drops will support you to build up the number of carers in your area. The fee paid for leaflet drops is £400 for 10,000 leaflets (and live tracking is expected). If you know an appropriate service, or if you want to do the leaflets drops yourself, this can be arranged.

Other methods

You're welcome to try any other methods of recruitment. You can speak with Tay about covering costs for recruitment methods and/or to discuss best strategies for the methods you want to try.

How to make and track referrals

You can make referrals via www.SparksFostering.org/Refer. Sparks Fostering will update you every few weeks on the progress of the referral (within the bounds of GDPR data sharing regulations).

If applicants contact Sparks Fostering directly, you would still be identified as the referrer if they mention you (or one of your partner organisations) when they are asked as part of the application process.

You will be notified when successful applicants have fostered for 3 months, at which point you will send an invoice to Sparks Fostering (info@SparksFostering.org), who will transfer the fee (between £2,000 to £3,500) within 28 days of receiving the invoice. Partnership organisations and other referrers would be paid directly with the same terms.

Next steps

Contact Tay (info@SparksFostering.org) to arrange a call to discuss your plan.

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Author

user