



FAMILY LINK *PLUS*

Providing **short breaks** for disabled children and young people



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL



What is Family Link Plus?

Families in Gloucestershire caring for their disabled child benefit from short breaks. Not only for the family to take a breather and attend to important tasks, but also for the children to have access to exciting opportunities and activities they might otherwise have missed out on.

FAMILY LINK PLUS has been providing this valued service for children and young people aged 0-18 for over 25 years in Gloucestershire. It sits within fostering in Children's Services and is fully regulated.

What do we mean by short breaks?

Short breaks come in all shapes and sizes! They take place within the child's home, in your own home, or in the local community and vary in duration and activity.

- **Day care** – regular breaks that range from an hour, to several hours per month. This can be during the week, at weekends, during school holidays or term time.
- **Overnight stays** – these take place at your home and range from one to several nights per month.
- **Community-based outings** – educational and recreational activities in a wide variety of locations across Gloucestershire.

These breaks help family carers to continue to care for their child, and they support the children's social and emotional development through new experiences, friendships, and skills.



Who can access Family Link Plus short breaks?

Family Link Plus is available for children referred to us by the Disabled Children's Teams, or from the wider Children's Services. The children who meet the **Family Link Plus** criteria will generally have one or more of the following:

- Physical or sensory disabilities
- Profound or multiple learning disabilities
- Complex medical or health care needs
- Behaviours of concern

Would you make a good Family Link Plus carer?

The kind of person we are looking for can say yes to these questions:

- Have a positive attitude
- Like spending time with children
- Enjoy new experiences and learning
- Have patience and commitment

If you have experience of caring for a disabled child or vulnerable adults, you might have valuable skills that will help you understand the needs of our children. If you think you can provide a loving, secure environment in which disabled children and young people can thrive, please get in touch today.



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Let's hear from our amazing Family Link Plus carers & team

“We are a strength-based service; we focus on our children’s abilities not the barriers that might stop them thriving and reaching their potential.”

(Cynthia,
FLP Team Manager)

“Everyone benefits from FLP short breaks – the children, the families, and the carers.”

(Fiona, FLP Carer)

“The most rewarding part of my role is matching a child with a foster carer and seeing that child happy!”

(Tracey, Senior Family Support Worker)

“The support from the FLP Team and the rest of the fostering service has been brilliant!”

(Louise, FLP Carer)

What support is offered to Family Link Plus Carers?

- Thorough assessment process including extensive training
- Competitive hourly rates of pay
- Travel expenses
- Ongoing professional support and supervision from your named supervising social worker
- Family Support Worker to support you with the care needs of the children
- 24-hour support, including out of hours
- Regular support meetings with other carers
- Carer appreciation and engagement events
- Carer Membership to The Fostering Network
- Access to a Fostering buddy during your assessment and beyond
- Refer a Friend – £500 paid to you in vouchers for any friend or family member who is approved as a Foster Carer
- Access to 'Fostering Champions' – experienced foster carers who support new carers at every step of the journey

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By giving a little time, you can make a big difference to the quality of life of local children and young adults.

Find out more

We welcome applicants who are over 21 from any ethnic background or gender, whether you are single or a couple. To talk to our friendly team or to find out more information, please contact us – we would love to hear from you!

Text FOSTER to 60060

Email familylinkplus@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Visit www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/familylinkplus

Call 01242 532654



We can produce this document in braille, in large print, on audio tape and in other languages. If you would like a copy in one of these formats, please call 01242 532654.



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