

Fostering Stories

Introducing The Gloucestershire County Council Fostering Family

Visit www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering for more information and fostering stories.



Fiona
Foster Carer for
Family Link Plus

Tell us a little about yourself

I'm married to Ed and we have three children, one of which lives at home. Before retiring from the NHS as a physiotherapist, I worked with adults with learning disabilities. I like making my own clothes (with varying results!), love being in the garden growing flowers and vegetables, visiting family all over the UK, and walking with my dog and friends.

What led you to FLP?

As I'd retired and two of my children had moved out of home, I had a little more time on my hands. I knew about FLP previously as I worked with disabled children when I was a junior physio. But after attending the annual Big Health Day and chatting to Tracey on the FLP stand, a little seed was planted about joining the team. I felt like the short break aspect of FLP fitted well with other things in my life; it was a little more flexible in terms of choosing your own hours, rather than a full-time fostering commitment.

How do your family get involved with FLP?

Whilst I'm the lead for the short breaks as my husband works full time, he's incredibly supportive and gets involved with the training and support groups too. Our son is always eager to be involved with the young people that come to the house; whether to share a meal, play a game or laugh at funny videos on their phones. He's often the best part about their visit!

What are FLP short breaks like?

What I love about short breaks is seeing how much the children enjoy them! One boy has been coming to us during school holidays since he was seven. At first, he was anxious but now he loves coming and often helps us plan activities. Once, he wanted to climb a hill to a local monument, so we trained and eventually made it – He was so proud! When children are with us, they have our full attention, which makes a big difference. One child had been home for two years due to COVID and struggled to engage because of the negativity he had experienced with his autism.

At first, he barely spoke, but now he joins activities and conversations. We've walked dogs, cooked meals, and encouraged him to try new foods—his mum was thrilled with his growing independence. We're about to welcome another boy with autism. Matching can take time, but the FLP team knows what works best and are really helpful!

I've learned so much from these children. Whilst some bounce into your home quite quickly, it can take a little time for others. But once you earn their trust, the rewards are incredible.

What advice would you give to someone thinking about becoming an FLP foster carer?

There isn't just one type of person who can be a short break carer – If you're reliable and care about others I would absolutely say give it a go. The FLP team really did hold our hands through the whole process with training and support so that we were ready. Everyone benefits from FLP short breaks – the children, the families and us carers.

There isn't just one type of person who can be a short break carer - If you're reliable and care about others I would absolutely say give it a go.