




We **are** By the Bridge. We **are** Therapeutic Fostering.

by**the**bridge
with **Cambian**

A smiling Black man and woman embracing outdoors. The man is wearing a light blue polo shirt and has a beard. The woman is wearing a pink shirt and has curly hair. They are both smiling warmly at the camera. The background is a soft-focus green landscape.

You can make a difference to a child's life today by becoming a Foster Parent with By the Bridge.

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What is Fostering?

Fostering is all about providing day to day support and a stable, caring home to a child when their parents or family are unable to look after them.

Every Fostering journey is different and every Foster child and family are unique. It's what makes Fostering so rewarding.

It can also be a great career. You'll see your hard work make a difference to children's lives – and you'll be paid to help give children the support and encouragement they need.

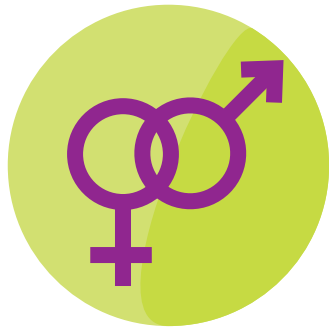
We welcome applications from people who are single or in a relationship, irrespective of gender, religion, race or sexual orientation.



Who can Foster?

You can Foster with By the Bridge, if you:

Want to help children



We welcome applications from everyone - whether you are male or female; single, married or in a relationship; if you have children of your own or not; and irrespective of gender, religion, culture or sexual orientation.

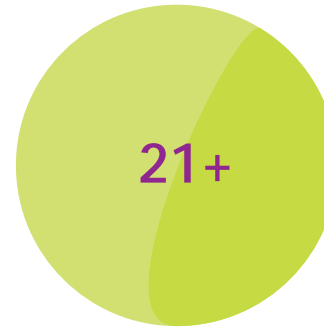
Have a spare room



You MUST have a spare bedroom for each child that you look after.* It doesn't matter if you own your property or if you rent - as long as you have your landlord's permission.

*sometimes same gender siblings can share but this can not be guaranteed.

Are over 21



There is no upper age limit to Foster as long as you are fit and healthy. By the Bridge requires all Foster Parents to be at least 21 years old. This is because we have children as old as 17 in our care.

Are available to offer support



To ensure that a young person receives all the support they need, we request that at least one Foster Parent be available if needed, full-time. If you can meet this requirement, flexible and/or part time work is sometimes acceptable.

A man and a woman are smiling and embracing each other outdoors. The man is on the left, wearing a light blue shirt and a dark jacket. The woman is on the right, wearing a dark top and a dark jacket. They are standing in front of a wall made of horizontal wooden planks. To the right, a white-framed glass door is visible. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Our unique approach to Fostering
puts the Foster Parents at the centre
of our child-focused team.

Who are By the Bridge?

We are By the Bridge, a leading independent Therapeutic Fostering organisation. We find and train Foster Parents so that young people in care get a better chance in life as a result of their Foster family's commitment and dedication.

Our unique approach to Fostering puts Foster Parents at the centre of our team, supporting them so they can support the development and progress of a child. Seeing a child in care discover their full potential and giving them the best possible chance at happiness to achieve their personal best is what makes Fostering with us so rewarding.

With over 20 years' experience of helping children rebuild their lives, our high quality work is in high demand. Over 100 Local Authorities have children placed with us, and more children are referred to us, every month. We are always looking for high quality Foster families who can offer a nurturing home to as many children as possible.



Types of Fostering

Short-term Fostering

Short-term Fostering can mean anything from one night to one year and is typically a temporary Fostering solution while a long-term, permanent arrangement can be made - this could be a long-term Fostering family or adoption.

Long-term Fostering

Sometimes a child or young person may not be able to return home to be cared for by their own family so a long-term Foster family is selected where they can feel safe and secure, long-term - this may be for a few years or even until a child becomes an adult and moves on to independent living.

Emergency Fostering

Sometimes children need a safe home and Foster family urgently or in an emergency situation, so is often unplanned and at short notice.

Emergency arrangements tend to be very short-term and generally do not exceed 14 days but Foster Parents approved to look after children on an Emergency Care basis need to be prepared to welcome a child at very short notice, and sometimes at night. This also means that a child may arrive scared, nervous and without any personal belongings so Foster Parents should be prepared to provide the essentials and support the child emotionally.

Respite

All By the Bridge Foster Parents are offered 21 nights paid 'Respite' for each child who they look after, every year. But what does 'Respite' mean and who provides the Care for the young person during this time?

Respite Fostering is when one Foster family temporarily looks after another Foster Parent's Foster child or young person. Whether it's a weekend break or a longer holiday, 'Respite' gives young people and their Foster families a chance to take a little break from their normal routine.

Respite Care is provided by local Foster Parents who have been subject to the same rigorous assessment process as all Foster Carers. Respite Fostering allows families to commit to shorter, less regular periods of Fostering, with more frequent, longer breaks between placements. This does mean that you can still Foster even if your work or family commitments make it difficult to Foster full-time.

Fostering asylum-seeking children

Some children who may need to be looked after are seeking asylum having been separated from their families following a traumatic experience. Often these children will have little or no English and will be frightened, arriving in a new country completely alone with no real idea of why they are here or what will happen to them. A Foster family can help them to feel secure whilst they are taken through the asylum application process.

Parent & Child Fostering

Parent & Child Fostering is a specialist type of Fostering, requiring additional specialist training, where a vulnerable parent and their young child (usually no older than 24 months) are able to live with a Foster family where they can be supported to learn how to properly care for and parent their child. Parent & Child Foster Parents are required to offer the usual support and mentorship for the young person but may also be required to prepare specific reports for Court. NB New families will require additional specialist training, ahead of Panel, in order to support parent and child placements.



Fostering children with disabilities or additional needs

Some children who need Foster care may have a physical or sensory disability, special educational needs or present on the Autistic spectrum. Because of the more complex care that may be required, this type of Fostering is also classified as specialist and is subject to additional fees and allowances. Parents and Carers of children with complex or additional needs often possess many of the skills needed to Foster children with similar needs.

Remand

Remand Fostering requires a Foster family to care for a young person who has been remanded by the courts. Remand Fostering is usually short-term and requires Foster Parents to work closely with the Young Offending Team in order to help the young person achieve the best outcome.

Fostering Siblings

In addition to all the different types of Fostering mentioned above, we are always looking for Foster families with enough room to Foster siblings - under short-term and long-term arrangements. It's important for siblings to stay together, whenever possible. For vulnerable children coming into Care, often the only support network they have experienced comes from their brothers or sisters so we always do everything we can to keep siblings together. If you have more than one spare bedroom, please let us know if you would consider Fostering siblings when you get in touch.



With ongoing training and support we enable our Foster Parents to nurture and support children to heal and develop.

By The Bridge Therapeutic Parenting Philosophy

At By the Bridge, the children in our care are at the centre of everything we do. We see our Foster Parents as our primary resource to enable opportunity for growth and recovery for our children. We see the family environment as having real potential for creating a continuously available arena for therapeutic healing. Through nurturing therapeutic parenting, our families offer our children the essential relational experiences they have missed. Therapeutic Parenting requires a different approach to traditional parenting. It places important emphasis on a depth of nurture, empathy and attunement. It is a relational, resourceful and skilful way to parent our children who we know have been impacted by experiences of trauma and adversity.

■ ■ ...it showed me ways of talking, listening and understanding from the child's point of view. ■ ■

Kerrie, By the Bridge - Therapeutic Foster Parent

We always hold in mind that our children view relationships based on past relational, social and cultural experiences. We know they have been influenced and shaped by all they have seen, heard and experienced, and this can become conflicting and confusing as they experience a caring, nurturing and respectful engagement with their Foster family. We understand that our children are responding and reacting, through their display of behaviour, from a place of survival. They have developed defences, known as adapted behaviours, and we appreciate that although these adapted behaviours can be harmful, destructive and often self-sabotaging, they have been the strategies that have helped them to survive the traumatic environments to which they were subjected.




Some children arrive in Foster Care having suffered trauma, neglect or abuse.

“ I have more self awareness & a better understanding of how I can tackle situations in a therapeutic way. ”

Joane, By the Bridge - Therapeutic Foster Parent

Therapeutic Parenting considers that offering consequences to challenging behaviours will have little to no effect. We encourage our Foster Parents to see the need behind the behaviour, and to focus on meeting the need rather than working consequentially with the behaviour. At By the Bridge we are curious about the things we cannot see. We ask, “What has happened to you; what have you lived through?”

We seek to understand the narrative of our children’s lives and how it has impacted their internal world and sense of self. We encourage children to tell their life story at their own pace, and for them to experience the relational qualities of being seen, heard and empathised with. We ask our Foster Parents to creatively and playfully attune to the child, inviting them into the relationship. It is via this connection that children experience the parent-child attachment and this helps them to begin to make meaning of their experiences and to form a positive sense of identity. A child’s experience of being in relationship helps them develop the confidence to explore and share what is held internally.



Our Therapeutic Fostering approach enables Foster Parents to help their children come to terms with their experiences.

Our fundamental aim is to provide the very best opportunity for our children to feel safe; have healthy relationships; and to heal and grow into emotionally, psychologically and physically healthy, happy individuals who will thrive in the world. We celebrate and positively reinforce the resilience of our children as we explore their hopes and dreams while continuously being delighted by the uniqueness of who they are.

By placing children with carefully matched, therapeutically trained families, we aim for our children to be given a reparative and healing experience that will contribute significantly to their recovery from all that has been missed and the trauma that they have endured.

Our therapeutic philosophy for responding to our children's complex presentations is underpinned and informed by cutting edge theory, science and research. Reflective practice and personal and professional development is continuously integrated into our work within the organisation. Our staff and Foster Parents are therapeutically educated and trauma-informed, and they are supported by a team of professionally trained Psychotherapists.

■ I found the training very relatable...
and thoroughly enjoyed sharing experiences
alongside other Foster Parents. ■

Elaine, By the Bridge - Therapeutic Foster Parent



We will work with you to meet your needs, as well as those of your Foster children and your family.

Fostering Training and Development

You don't need any previous training or formal qualifications to Foster. At By the Bridge we provide an extensive range of training to our Foster Parents. Whether you want to gain new qualifications and develop your career or enhance your Fostering skills and knowledge base, our matrix of comprehensive Fostering-specific training will help you build on the qualities, skills and life experiences you may already have.

At By the Bridge, we want you to feel secure and confident in your work. We will work with you to identify training to meet your needs, as well as those of your Foster children and your family.

We treat and train Foster Parents as professionals with the tools to build strong relationships with their children and to adapt their skills to think therapeutically in their approach to Foster Parenting.

Therapeutic Thinking Training

We offer all new Foster Parents the opportunity to engage in our 20 day Therapeutic Thinking Training program - a progressive training program specifically designed to educate and inform you about Therapeutic Parenting.

Our training is designed to gradually advance and enrich your therapeutic understanding, skill and knowledge – embedding your knowledge as you gain more Fostering experience. You will quickly have the opportunity to learn about theories and subjects to support your understanding of the complex needs of our children and young people – and put it into practice. Our unique Therapeutic Thinking Training program has been developed and is delivered by experienced, professional Psychotherapists.

Therapeutic Training

By The Bridge Fostering offer a full 20 day training program

Our program is designed to offer reflective practice, education and a framework for Therapeutic Parenting.

4 days Therapeutic Introduction Mandatory Training

- Therapeutic Thinking Development in Mind • Therapeutic Thinking with Attachment in Mind
- Therapeutic Thinking with Trauma in Mind • Therapeutic Thinking with Behaviours in Mind

Foster Parents can request a place on this training via their Supervising Social Worker (No academic requirement)

8 days Therapeutic Foundation Training

- Therapeutic Parenting • Relationships & Relating • The Child's Narrative • Brain, Body & Mind
- Exploring Playfulness & Creativity • What Does the Child's Behaviour Tell Us?
- Extending Curiosity • Building and Reflecting Upon Resilience

Foster Parents can request a place on this training via their Supervising Social Worker (No academic requirement)

8 days Therapeutic Advanced Training

- Integration of Therapeutic Parenting; Reflective Practice • Discovering the Body & Mind through the trauma lens
- Family Systems & Transgenerational trauma • Exploring Neurodiversity • The Spectrum of Relating
- Exploring the Uniqueness of Who We Are • The Power of Healing • Making Meaning... of it all

Foster Parents need to meet the criteria and submit an application form via their Supervising Social Worker
(No academic requirement)

Individual Subjects

(external training providers / subjects)

Foster Parents are able to book subject workshops through their regional admin



Some of the By the Bridge team have Fostered, so they know first-hand the realities of Fostering.

Children in our care

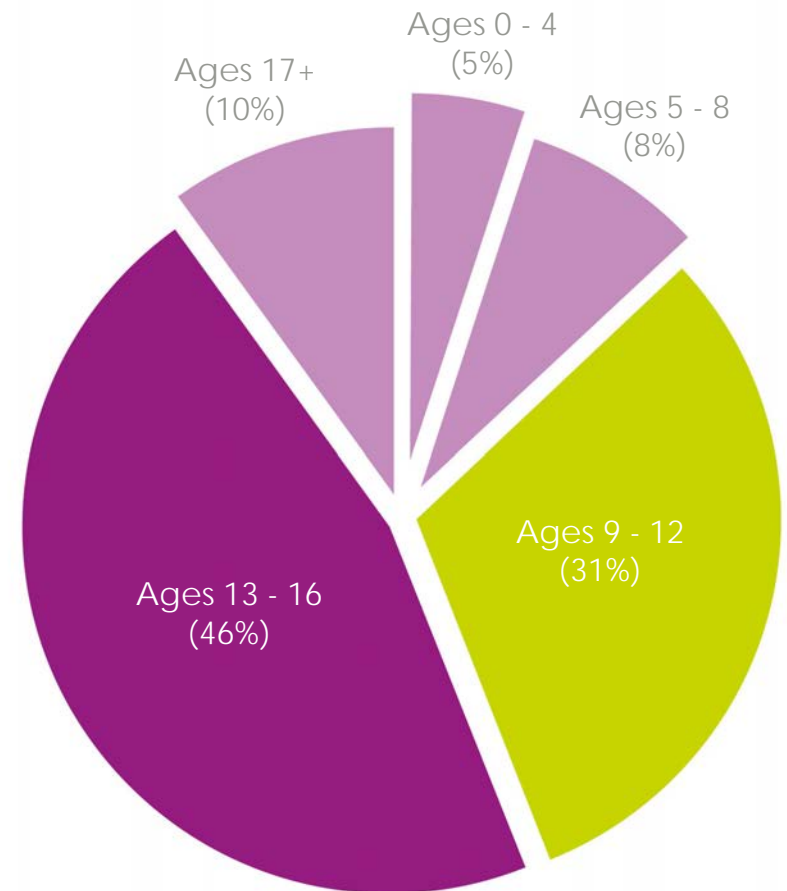
12 is the average age of the children in our care

87% of our children are over 9 years old

Did you know?

Children need Fostering for a variety of reasons. Some children may need Fostering as a result of family or financial reasons, whilst others may be because of abuse or neglect.

Whilst there are several different types of Fostering, most children find themselves with By the Bridge Foster Parents on an emergency basis which normally results in short or long term placements. Every child is different and so is every placement.



All the statistics on this page are based on data from May 2019



We're available 24/7, 365 days a year, with a dedicated support team for out of hours calls.

Foster Parents Benefits & Support

Fostering can sometimes be challenging but is always rewarding. By the Bridge offers a range of support and benefits to ensure that our Foster families have everything they need to effectively and happily support the children in their care:



We're available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. With a dedicated out-of-hours team and local office support teams – including in-house Psychotherapists; Education Specialists & child advocates (EAGALS).

Our Supervising Social Workers carry protected caseloads, and conduct regular Support & Supervision Groups to ensure that we are always available to support our Foster Parents, whenever they need us.



We are well known for offering a high quality integrated Therapeutic Fostering service, with over 20 years' experience of thoughtful matching by our in-house Referrals team.

With over 2000 children referred to us from Local Authorities every month, we need more Foster Parents to provide each and every child with a safe and nurturing home in which to heal and build a stronger future.



We believe it is important that our Foster Parents are treated as professionals and are given sufficient financial payments to enable them to Foster full-time.

With By the Bridge you'll receive great weekly pay and Fostering allowances (tax free). Additional allowances to cover clothing, holiday and festive gifts are also paid, for the children in your care.



You don't need previous training or formal qualifications to Foster. By the Bridge Foster Parents receive ongoing training and career progression.

Our unique Therapeutic Thinking Training program has been developed and is delivered by our experienced, Therapeutically-trained, Psychotherapists (see page 9).

In addition to these benefits and support, as a By the Bridge Foster Parent, you will also receive:



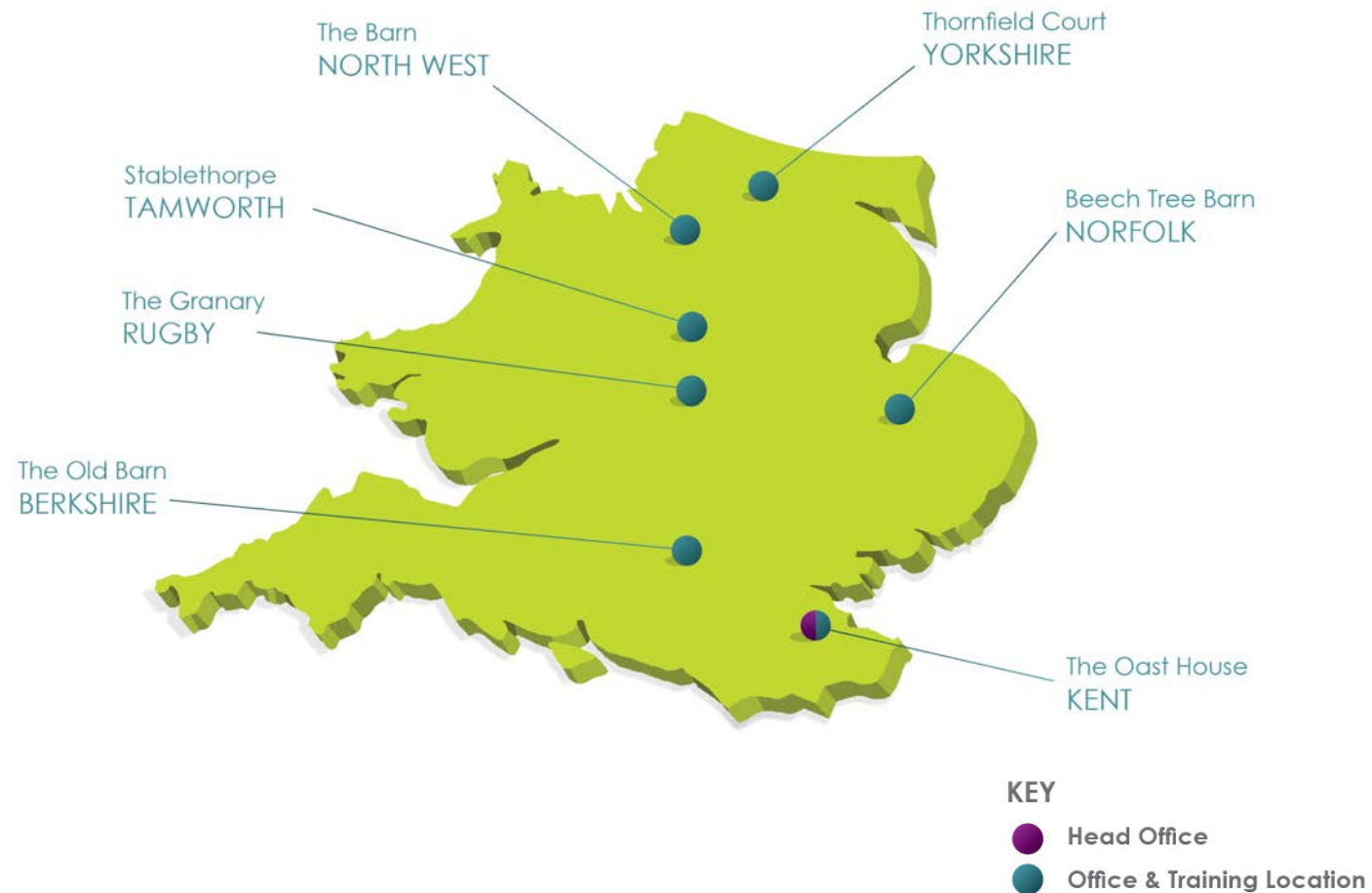
We have offices nationwide
providing you with a local service.




Find us

By the Bridge has offices across England and offers Fostering services nationwide.

If you are unsure if we provide Fostering in your area, please call 0800 644 6230.



A close-up photograph of a Black woman with a large afro hairstyle, smiling broadly with her eyes closed. A young Black boy is leaning in from the right, kissing her on the cheek. They are both wearing white t-shirts. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with palm trees and mountains in the distance. A yellow structure, possibly part of a playground, is visible on the right. A purple rectangular box with white text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Fostering is a big decision, so we completely understand that you may have many questions that need answering before you apply.

Frequently Asked Questions

It's normal to have questions when thinking about Fostering. Here are some commonly asked questions and answers that you may find helpful.

Do I need to own my own home?

No, but you do need a settled home environment and a place where children can feel safe and welcome. If you rent your property you will need written permission from your landlord.

What will the children be like?

Most Foster children, whatever their background, will have gone through some difficult experiences. This might affect their behaviour, but they will also have plenty of special qualities too – just like any other child. It takes a special kind of person to Foster a child and to understand that they may have been affected by what they have seen and experienced - and to give them the time and tools to come to terms and heal from them.

I was in trouble with the Police when I was younger – is this a problem?

Not necessarily. Of course, some serious offences would mean that you wouldn't be accepted for Fostering. However, if you've gone through difficult times in the past, and used your experiences to become a stronger person today, you could be an ideal person to help turn a child's life around.

Are you interested in male-female couples only?

No, we're interested in people who have the right approach to make great Foster Parents, whatever their family situation. We welcome applications from everyone, regardless of gender, marital status, religion, culture or sexuality.

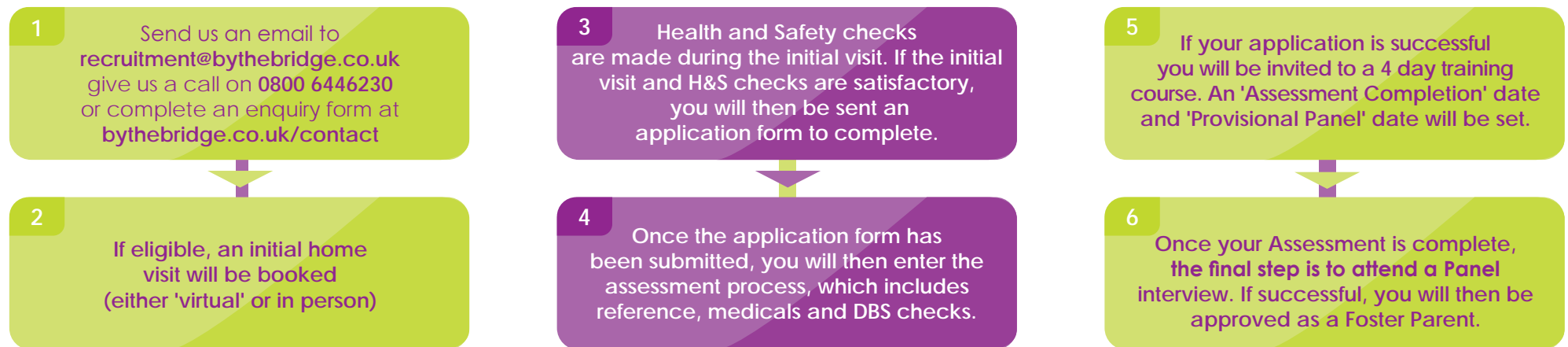
For more answers to your Frequently Asked Questions visit bythebridge.co.uk/FAQs



On average the Fostering assessment process takes from 12 to 14 weeks.

How to become a Foster Parent

Below are the stages to become a Foster Parent with By the Bridge.



So what happens next?

Once we have received your initial enquiry, we'll be in touch to organise an 'initial visit' where we can find out more about you, your family and your home. It's an informal chat which will allow you to get to know us more and find out everything you need to know about becoming a Foster Parent with By the Bridge.

There's no commitment at this stage, just a fantastic opportunity to find out everything you've always wanted to know about this exciting and rewarding career where you'll have the chance to change the lives of many young people.

We look forward to speaking with you further, so be sure to complete our enquiry form today. The sooner you find out about Fostering with By the Bridge, the sooner you could be ready to welcome your first Foster child.

**Call us to find out more about Fostering with By the Bridge
on 0800 644 6230 or visit bythebridge.co.uk/contact**



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