



**Foster**  
**for Bradford**



## **Mockingbird Hub Home Carer**

**Payment £27,040 per annum** (£1040 paid fortnightly through allowances)

**This is a full time role and includes an additional average of 12 to 16 sleepovers a month.**

Hub carers must have at least one day off each week and one weekend each month and a maximum of 20 days' rest time from the Mockingbird role.

**Hub carers must have two spare beds, one in a bedroom for planned sleepovers, and the other can be a sleepover space in another room such as a bed sofa in a study for emergency sleepovers. Both beds are to be used solely for Mockingbird.**

Foster carers that have children and young people in their care will only be able to apply with the prior written agreement from the child's social worker and the supervising social worker. Hub carers will not be able to provide additional or new placements once in the role.

**Expressions of interest closing date: 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023 5pm**

**Interviews: Week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

## **Hub home carer role and responsibilities**

The role of the hub home carer is crucial to the success of Mockingbird. It can be rewarding, but also demanding and unpredictable. It is a full-time role for approved foster carers, due to the organisation and planning needed to make a constellation work effectively, as well as the day-to-day support care offered to children and young people and foster carers in the constellation.

A key factor in the success of the hub home service is the hub home carers' understanding of the constellation as a form of extended family. Hub carers should see their role as one of leadership and as a model of good practice. Hub home foster carers act as the glue that unites the satellite families into one community.

### **Personal attributes**

#### **Expert knowledge**

Hub home carers will have completed their preparation training, post approval induction period and the national Training Support and Development Standards. They will have experience of creating comfortable home environments and will need the ability to develop authentic relationships with children of different ages, ethnicities and genders. They must be prepared to build a strong and collaborative professional relationship with the liaison worker, as well as have an established knowledge base with respect to:

- children and young people's behaviour and development
- safer caring and communicating about high-risk situations
- the local authority role as corporate parent
- the foster carer's role as a member of the professional team around the child.

#### **Stable relationships**

Hub home foster carers need to be energetic and resourceful with emotional stability and adequate sources of support. The hub home role is usually undertaken by two foster carers living together due to the 24/7 nature of the work.

If a single foster carer is considered for the hub home carer role, careful planning is needed to ensure that the needs of the constellation can be met - particularly around how to manage crisis support requests from one satellite when the hub home carer is already supporting another child or young person.

Satellite families are confronted with challenging and emotionally exhausting situations and often seek emotional and practical support from the hub home carers. To cope with these demands, all hub home carers need to be confident in their own relationships and able to seek support from other sources, when necessary, in order to maintain the energy and creativity needed to support the constellation. It is also important the hub home carer takes sufficient time off to avoid becoming run down. Services should enable the hub home carer to take one day off a week and one

weekend off a month and should think about how to cover the role of the hub home carer within the constellation during these times of hub carer leave.

### **Flexibility**

Hub home foster carers will often have to adjust their plans to deal with unpredictable events. Examples of the type of flexibility that might be required include the ability to:

- accommodate requests for crisis support care from the satellite families
- accommodate children and young people's schedules
- provide transport for families to attend activities at the hub home
- host contact sessions with birth families
- work around satellite families' schedules when setting up times to talk.

### **Ability to plan, organise and implement**

Hub home foster carers must be able to plan, co-ordinate schedules, organise events, arrange catering (although this is often delegated across the group) and host monthly constellation meetings and social events in their own home. They need to be creative and flexible in encouraging satellite home families to participate in events.

### **Confidence in mediating and dealing with conflict**

Hub home foster carers provide support care to satellite families in times of conflict. This support may happen in the hub or satellite home and may entail an unplanned sleepover with the intention of the child or young person returning to the satellite home as soon as the conflict is resolved. Emergency support is offered through clearly defined delegated authority and under appropriate supervision.

The hub home offers a neutral, safe space where children and young people and their satellite carers can work out where they are in their relationship, express their feelings in appropriate ways and communicate in a potentially fraught situation.

### **Provide responsive and empathetic support and advocate when necessary**

Hub home carers must be good at creating situations that help satellite carers and the children or young people they care for to feel important and valued. They will also act on their behalf when necessary or may advocate for their needs or for additional resources.

### **Competence in working within legal processes**

The hub home carer's role may involve giving statements or being present in court proceedings along with a child or young person's satellite carers. They must also keep clear records of support care offered and ensure that they are always working within the bounds of delegated authority.

### **Confidentiality and information sharing**

This role will entail dealing with confidential information regarding the fostering families. The Hub carer must be able to deal with sensitive information and report and share to the appropriate service/persons in line with Bradford Council's information sharing, confidentiality and GDPR policies and guidance.

### **Support provided by the hub home**

The hub home is the primary source of support provided through Mockingbird. This support comes in many shapes and sizes.

#### **Building a sense of community and belonging**

The hub home is at its most effective when children and young people see themselves as part of the household rather than as guests. They can then participate in preparing meals or doing some household chores, while being expected to maintain appropriate behaviour and follow house rules. Satellite carers must also feel comfortable in the hub home and should feel a valued member of the constellation community.

The hub home and satellite home foster carers have to communicate effectively to ensure that there is continuity in safer caring practice and in what behaviour is expected of children and young people while they are at the hub home.

#### **Regular contact with satellite home families and safer caring for everyone**

The hub home foster carers are proactive in maintaining contact and regularly checking in with satellite home families. By maintaining regular contact, hub home carers will be aware of changes in the satellite home families, new problems or escalating difficulties that need to be discussed with all the relevant members of the team around each child. They will be able to plan and offer support with the aim of averting crisis situations or placement breakdowns.

#### **Organising activities and events**

The hub home carers are responsible for maintaining and circulating a calendar of monthly events, meetings, social get-togethers, training and support sessions, activities for children and young people, and their own availability for respite. These shared events build and sustain the community. The following activities are essential components of Mockingbird:

- monthly constellation meeting or training and support sessions
- social get-togethers
- children and young people's activities.

The constellation calendar also may include relevant local community activities or school events that families may want to attend.

#### **Support care and sleepovers**

The hub home carer needs to subscribe to the idea that some time out away from the intensity of close family relationships, as well as the need to have different

positive individuals in our lives, is normal and healthy. It also promotes stronger, healthier relationships with the people that we are closest to.

This sort of distancing has a healthy developmental and restorative function, even when relationships are unproblematic. Many individuals achieve this through solitary activities such as reading, exercise or listening to music. However, looked after children and young people may have less freedom for their own protection and may have many more scheduled activities (contact, CAMHS, care planning, PEP meetings and others) which all combine to a very busy life and can create tensions. Therefore, it is important that children and young people and their foster carers should have access 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to planned and emergency support care.

### **Planned support care**

Satellite home foster carers can sign up for planned respite care on a monthly calendar provided by the hub home family. The hub home foster carers should plan ahead to let satellite families know when they will not be available to provide this service. This includes overnight sleepovers and shorter periods, for example, after school or transport to and from activities.

### **Crisis support care**

The satellite home foster carers may call the hub home foster carers directly in a crisis situation to request urgent respite. The hub home can offer it on the basis of agreed prior delegated authority for decision-making. The model is designed to enable immediate support to foster carers, while increasing the ability of everyone to work effectively during the crisis. Examples of short notice respite situations may include a satellite carer's need to:

- drop off one child/young person while another child/young person is taken to an emergency doctor appointment
- drop off children/young people while dealing with own health emergency
- have children/young people picked up from an external event and taken home for a few hours while dealing with a short-term crisis
- have a few hours of respite to recover composure when a child/young person is being very challenging
- arrange for a child or young person to stay overnight at the hub home due to unforeseen emergencies or the escalation of tensions in the satellite home.

### **Temporary placement in a disruption**

The hub home is the preferred location for children and young people whose placements have to end suddenly or prematurely whatever the reason. Children and young people may stay in the hub home for an agreed extended period of time while a new placement is being agreed. In this situation it is hoped that the new placement may be with a family already in the constellation, or a new family may be able to join

the constellation. This enables the young person to maintain important links with the hub home and other adults, children and young people in the constellation.

### **Keep connected**

Maintaining good relationships can matter more than anything else for children in care. In contrast, damage to children can occur when strong relationships are broken. This can occur when children and young people move into a permanent foster placement, return to their birth family, through adoption or by leaving care. In some instances, young people and previous foster carers are prevented from maintaining contact against both their wishes.

Mockingbird provides stable environments and secure attachments for children in short and long term placements and hub home carers can play a vital role advocating for children and their former foster carers to maintain a relationship. Hub home carers, in discussion with the fostering service, may also be able to support this ongoing connection by inviting young people and their families to occasional constellation social events. This enables a lighter touch connection, allowing children and young people to transition to a new living situation without experiencing loss of important relationships.