

As we step into this new year, I am pleased to share that we are well positioned for the year ahead. Our core fostering services and partnerships with Local Authorities are thriving, thanks to your ongoing commitment to work together and help shape the lives and the future of the young people in our care.

“ I am so proud of all that we achieved together in 2023. It has been a year marked by change, growth and challenges. THANK YOU to each and every one of you for your dedication every day, in helping our looked after children to find success. ”

Achieving our full charitable status in October was a major milestone, unlocking a myriad of possibilities that will allow us to add to and enhance our services. We're focusing on areas where we can make the most impact, beginning with extending our foster carer network in key regions like Blackpool/Lancashire, Hull & Humberside, and Liverpool. Additionally, we're gearing up for expansion into the North Midlands and East region, encompassing cities such as Leicester, Coventry, Northampton, Peterborough, and Cambridge. This will be a significant move for us, and I'm genuinely excited about the new opportunities this will bring and what we will be able to accomplish.



Welcome! Croeso!

Prioritising the needs of our children has always been central to the Agency's decision making; it was with this focus that we made the difficult decision to withdraw our services from Wales. The transition is going smoothly, with minimum impact on the children and the exit date has been agreed as 31st March 2024.

Reflecting on the insightful ideas you shared during our strategic planning day, we will also be exploring innovative opportunities to grow over the next few years, including parent and baby units, 16+ supported accommodation, and 'fostering to adopt' services.

While we continue our efforts to enrich the lives of the vulnerable children we support through our various training, support groups, and events like those shown in this newsletter, it's crucial that we prioritize our own well-being. Fostering can be emotionally demanding, and I encourage you to make full use of the support systems in place as we grow and adapt into our role as a charitable foster care organization.

Without each one of you, we wouldn't be the FCC we are today. Here's to another year of growth, compassion, and collective success!

Thank You

Sam Ram
Chief Executive Officer
Prif Weithredwr



Welsh – Important Words

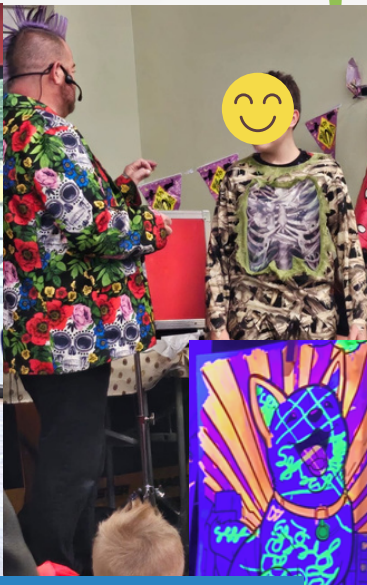
Tip! - use google translate audio button to hear how to say these 😊

- Family – Teulu
- My family – Fy nheulu
- Friend - Ffrind
- My friend - Fy ffrind
- My home - Fy nghartref



Events & Activities Highlights – Pages 2&3
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Recruiting Carers!

Kids Competitions and Awards!



Support Groups!



Sunflower challenge!



Spooktastic costumes!



Christmas Fuddle!



Skills to Foster!





At the end of 2023 we went out to meet a few of our foster carers to talk about why they foster and what inspires them. They have shared their stories with us on camera. Look out for more stories in 2024!



Watch these new videos on our **YouTube Channel - @FosterCareCharity** And on **Our Fostering Stories** page of our website www.fostercarecharity.org.uk

Our Video Project! Your Stories!



Thank you Rachel!



Help Us Grow!



Thank you Lee and Stewart!



Know Someone Who Would Love to Foster?
YOU can earn up to £1000 when you refer someone.

£100 is payable when we receive a completed Application Form AND a Form F Assessment is started. A further £900 is payable when they are approved as a foster carer with us.

Don't forget to make sure YOU are listed on the Registration of Interest form as the person who referred them!

Can you foster?
Can you open your HEART & your HOME?

Note: You must be a current FCC foster carer to take advantage of this offer. If you refer a couple the fee is £1000. The fee is per new fostering household, not per person referred.



Staff Spotlight!



Senior Supervising Social Worker
Uwch Gweithwyr Cymdeithasol Goruchwylio
Shirley Meredith

My Fun Fact. I came into social work later in life, not going to university until I was 45. Previously I have worked as a barber/hairdresser, and I had my own Gastro pub for 25 years. I love not having to work at the weekend and public holidays now, and I make the most of time with my lovely granddaughters.

What do you find most enjoyable and interesting about your role with FCC?

“ Having previously worked for FCC, I found working from home isolating at first and returned to my previous role with a Local Authority. However once there, I realised that I had made a big mistake, and I really missed the ability to spend quality time with foster parents every month and attend important meetings with them. I love working with foster parents and building a strong relationship with them, visiting them in their home and helping them in all aspects of their very challenging role. Something you can only dream about as a SSW with a Local Authority as I was always firefighting. It now feels like I never left, and I have slotted back into place, and I am so happy to be back working with the team. ”

What's the biggest challenge in your region and how are you tackling this?

“ As always for me it is recruitment of new foster carers – there are so many other agencies that advertise that I feel it is difficult to stand out. FCC is special in many ways and it's different because of its child-centred approach. Having a presence at events helps and trying to encourage word of mouth, however with the numbers of children needing homes increasing there are never enough foster parents to care for them all. ”

“I love working with foster parents and building a strong relationship with them”



Lauren Williams

I have worked in the childcare sector for around 10 years, with a pitstop working in a building society and after having my own children I decided to put my talents and training together. And here I am working for The Foster Care Charity, I have slotted in to the job role with Finance and I am already getting stuck in, learning all about the role and what it entails. FCC is an eye opening wonderful business where you can see the difference being made to as many children's lives as possible.

Finance Assistant
Swyddog Cyllid



Sarah Chandler

I joined the FCC in September 2023. Everyone has been really lovely and made me feel very welcome. I have previously worked within the Finance sector and when this vacancy came up I jumped at the chance to be part of something so worthwhile. My role includes making sure Carers are paid, paying bills and responding to general enquiries.

Finance Assistant
Swyddog Cyllid



My Fun Fact: I know a lot about football shirts and their values after a short period of time working with a friend selling historic football shirts.

My Fun Fact. I've taken up running over the last year or so, completing a few 10km races and I plan on doing a half marathon this Spring.

Welcome New Carers!

- Emma Aston & Matthew Walker
- Leanne Razie
- Cherrelle Arnold and Gavin Thornton
- Louie Knight & Leah Boswell
- Rebecca Marshall & Thomas Eckersley
- Linda Hartles & Weronika Symoszyn
- Dean & Taryn Goulsbra
- Nicola Lockett & Sean Phelan
- Simon Knox & Louise Burns

Foster carers who joined us
July - Dec 2023

Carer Compliments

“IRO Cath Gray – thanked Laura & Glenn for the work they have done with KaJ through a difficult time and recognized that they have advocated on his behalf” THANK YOU!

PEP - Virtual School Fiona Pringle, noted how foster child LM had transformed and credited it to the carers Pauline & Manuel. She feels it is a lovely story and is delighted to be part of her journey.

At CLA Review, parents of RL commented "a big thank you to Liz & Graham for everything they do, it's amazing what you do for R and for us...". When all the positives were read out about how well R is doing, parents said "that's all down to Graham & Liz!".





In October we celebrated officially becoming **THE FOSTER CARE CHARITY** with lots of lovely cakes!



We're stepping into a new chapter as The Foster Care Charity. It's an iconic evolution for us. But our aim remains unwavering. "To transform the lives of even more children and young people, all while staying true to our core values of being ambitious for children, morally driven, collaborative partners and fair and inclusive in all that we do."



Welcome New Trustees!



Donna Jackman
Trustee
Ymddiriedolwru

“The work of FCC resonates with me as does the Agency values and ethics.”

I have over 35 years of experience as a strategic and operational leader in the field of Children and Family Services. My career has been shaped by the need to make a real difference to children; creating transformational solutions; turning the essence of Equality & Diversity and Community cohesion into a habitual part of how organisations pursue and achieve excellence in what they do. Having worked with unions, 3rd sector community organisations, NSPCC/Action for Children/Adoption Agencies, I've more recently been supporting young teenage mothers within a mother and baby support unit.



Simon Egerton
Trustee
Ymddiriedolwru

For many years I worked as a Director for Clarke Roxburgh (Insurance) during which time I became a Fellow of the Chartered Insurance Institute and a Chartered Insurance Broker. After leading the successful sale of that company, I then purchased and ran an Ofsted 'Outstanding' provision children's day care nursery jointly with my wife for 11 years – selling it in 2020. I was appointed a Magistrate in 2005 and continue to sit predominantly in Family Court. As well as serving as Chairman of the Bench 2018–2022, I have been a member of Malvern Hills Round Table, Malvern Hills Knights Club and Colwall Rotary Club.



Good bye & Thank you Betty!

Betty Hutton resigned as a trustee in December 2023 after 5 years of dedicated service with FCC. She was a valued member of our board of Directors and our Company Secretary playing a key role in helping us move from a co-operative to a charity. She will be missed.

Thank you for all your energy, sincere support and positive belief in FCC and all that it can be now and in the future.

Highlights: Quality of Care Report 2022/23

Over the last 12 months, FCC has received approximately 73,000 referrals for children in need of a loving and supportive home.

“The roles that our foster carers and staff play are increasingly crucial in providing safe homes for these children.”



I have been inspired reading about the positive outcomes we have achieved. Our exciting plans in England to expand our carer population are vital to meeting the needs of children, and we must continue working together through recruitment events, social media, and our FCC carer referral bonus to attract new carers to FCC.



Steve Field
Director of Child Care England & Wales
Cyfarwyddwr Gofal Plant Lloegr a Cymru

We can take pride in our achievements throughout 2023.

Our average placement length was an impressive 3 years and 4 months, significantly higher than the national average.

We have achieved an outstanding average school attendance of 98%, surpassing the national school attendance average of 92%.

As we reflect on these positive accomplishments, let's use 2024 as an opportunity to further develop the crucial services we provide to children. I am truly thankful for the vital roles that our staff and carers play in making a genuine difference in the lives of children.





WHEN?
Where?
WHAT?

Get full details about FCC Training on the resources pages of the online Carer Info Hub

DDP PACE for Carers with Dr Billy Smythe

7th & 14th May

Virtual via Zoom
Induction training
9.30am – 2.30pm

Diary Dates!

Child Development with Vicki Wood

6th & 13th March

online via TEAMS
Induction training for all carers
10am – 12 noon

TRAINING FOCUS 2024 - mandatory courses

Child Sexual Exploitation, Managing Allegations & Safeguarding Children

At FCC training is at the core of our practice to develop the skills and knowledge of carers and staff to enable positive outcomes for the children we care for. Training is attended by both staff and carers together as good practice. **If you want to book or need information about mandatory training courses that you may have outstanding please get in touch with your SSW or Carol M our training co-ordinator.**  carol.merriman@fccharity.org.uk

Don't Forget!

All carers need to do the government "PREVENT Duty Training" (eLearning)
www.support-people-vulnerable-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk

What YOU Said... about Equality & Diversity training!

"I will consider the Bataris box and the impact of my own attitudes (and associated body language)"

"I really enjoyed the session a good starting point for exploring the topic. The group work helped me to see the main issues from the point of others and how I can be better as a practitioner."

"Jill has amazing knowledge which she can share in a friendly and accessible way."

"Brilliant session, found it fascinating."

"Because of this I'm more aware that being in care means the child is trying to fit in with me. So I'll give supportive space to explore what they really feel and their reactions to help as we both adjust to each other."

Mandatory or Induction Training What do I need?

These **Induction trainings** are for newly approved foster carers and need to be completed within the first 12 months of approval.

- Introduction to Attachment
- Impact of Developmental Trauma
- Introduction to Child Development
- Principles of Therapeutic Parenting
- PREVENT Radicalization training (accessed via Government website)
- DDP PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy)

All carers can redo these if they want a refresh or to reskill.

Mandatory training is required to be completed within your first 18 months of approval as a carer **AND refreshed every 3 years.**

Mandatory training courses include: Safeguarding Children, Safer Caring, Reporting & Recording, Paediatric First Aid and Managing Challenging Behaviour.

2023 Training Summary

33

Training courses held

311

Joined us for face to face training

440

Mandatory courses completed via Training Hub

75

people did Equality & Diversity Training

113

carers completed 12 specialist induction and skills refresh courses



Pumpkin Carving Challenge



You Did it! Well Done! Cool! Excellent!
Fe wnest ti e! Da iawn! Cŵ! Gwych!



CONGRATS!

First Cub Camp!



First Snowman!



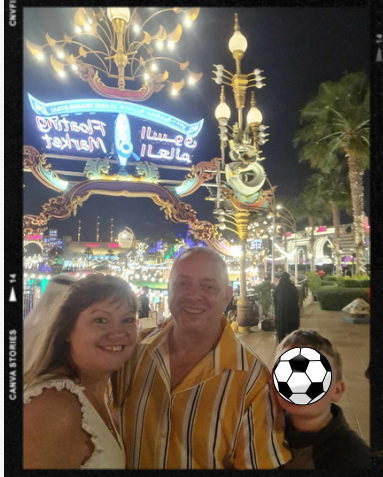
Congratulations, Tyler has been selected to receive an Achievement Awards.

The award they are nominated for is **KS1 Award**.

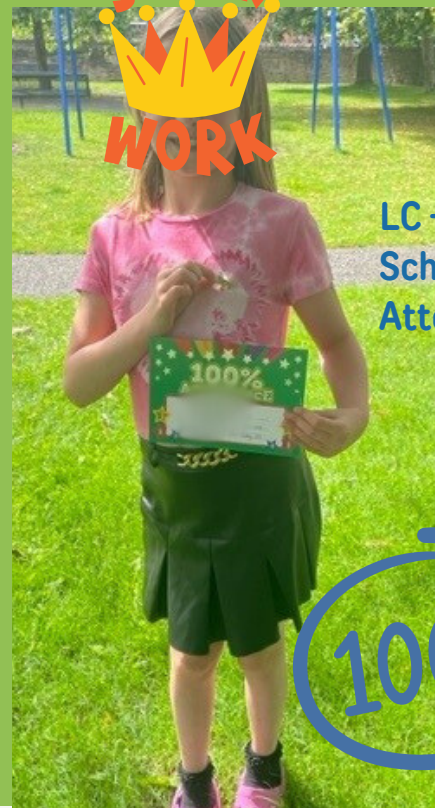
The event will take place on Friday 6th October 2023 at: T Club, 9 Birmingham Rd, West Bromwich B71 4LF. Register

Tyler - KS1 Award!
from Sandwell Borough Council

First Passport!!



First Halloween!



LC - 100% School Year Attendance!



Amazing work Avril - 11 GCSE's!
 3 A's, 5 B's and the rest C's. Great job on your B in English and C in Maths and getting your first choice of A level courses at College.



WELL DONE

Achievements

Nature's Christmas

Our Christmas Card Design Competition



A great winning design. Thank you Kaleb!



Super work SC – earning the “Whizz Kid” award for all the extra homework you did over the summer holidays!

HIP HIP HOORAY

Well done AS for earning over 378 behaviour points and getting an invite to the school disco!



Congratulations to CV who had 3 solos in the theatre production. She performed in SIX, Les Mis and Blood Brothers!

CONGRATS!

Llongyfarchiadau!



Building Mental Health Superpowers!

Real life superstars can be your life guides – and inspire you to be your best self. 😊

Whether it's someone famous you look up to or just your loyal pet – it's up to you who's on your team.

Just keep them in your mind ready to help you. If you need advice just ask your superstar team...

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Want to share who your superstars are?

Email: kidz@fccharity.org.uk

We'd love to know who inspires you and who's on your team when you need help and advice. We are also here to support you and be part of your superstar team.

