

FOSTER CARERS

As a foster carer you care for other peoples' children when they are not able to do so. Often those children become a part of your life and you a part of theirs. Foster carers can find that after months or even years of caring for a child that the social services department they are employed by chooses to take the children away and place them with other carers – either potential adopters, family members or other foster carers seemingly more suited to providing long term care. There are however things that foster carers can do.

If you consider that your relationship with the child or children you care for is being overlooked or not recognised by the Courts and social services you could apply to the Court yourself for an order that the children live with you.

Examples would include –

- Asking to be assessed as part of any Court proceedings or care order application
- Asking the Court to make you a party to care proceedings so that you can take a full part and be fully informed of decisions and of what is being said about you and the children
- Asking for permission to apply for a special guardianship order or a residence order so that you are able to ask the Court to make an order that the children live with you long term
- Lastly asking to be considered as potential adopters for the children

Sadly you will not be entitled to legal aid to pay your lawyer's fees and we at 12 College Place are very aware of that. We are able to offer a cost effective advice service at the initial stages of any application and then cover all your representation up to a final hearing. Early advice may save you a lot of money in the long term.

In addition we are acutely aware that often foster carers can be entitled to benefits and support from social services departments which are very often not provided. Support can be slow in coming or indeed not even provided. Money may be tight and no assistance or not the right assistance provided by the social services department. We can help. We can advise you as to what you are entitled to and how to get it. We can provide assistance with cutting through the bureaucracy and red tape to get you what you and the children you care for actually need.