North Ayrshire Council Family Placement Team regularly runs recruitment campaigns to help raise public awareness of the shortage of foster carers in North Ayrshire and across Scotland.

Once a person shows an interest in fostering the Family Placement Team offers a confidential and informative service to help people decide if the time is right for them to foster. An allocated social worker meets regularly with the applicant and their family to complete the in-depth fostering assessment.

Once an applicant has been approved as a foster carer they receive a comprehensive induction to their new role and then regular ongoing training to develop their knowledge and skills of the fostering task.
North Ayrshire Council believes that foster carers need to be well supported in their fostering task to ensure that they are able to provide high quality placements for local children. Our carers make a real difference and we believe that their valuable input deserves rewarding. We do this in a number of ways:
Supervising Social Worker
Each of our foster carers has a supervising social worker allocated to them to ensure that they are fully supported. The supervising worker will arrange to visit you at least once a month and will regularly contact you by telephone. They will help to support your work with the child, including your attendance at meetings arranged for the child. They can also help with things like report writing and working with birth parents.

Child’s Social Worker
The child placed with you will also have their own social worker who will support you to care for the child.

Children’s Worker
We have our own children’s worker within the Family Placement Team who can offer therapeutic support to foster children and their carers to help maintain placements.

Training
During assessment all prospective foster carers will attend a 3-day ‘Skills to Foster’ course in preparation for the fostering task. After approval our carers are expected to attend a variety of training courses to learn about the various aspects of caring for children. This training is organised at various times and various venues to accommodate the needs of our carers. Some training is available on-line so that carers can choose when they want to study. We offer our carers the opportunity to study for the SVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People at no cost to themselves. This is a well recognised childcare qualification which reflects the complex task that foster carers have in caring for someone else’s child in your own home. We also have a well stocked library where carers can borrow books, articles and professional journals to aid their own learning and self development.

Fees and Allowances
All our carers receive generous allowances that reflect the challenging task that foster carers have. The allowances also provide financial support to cover the cost of caring for a child. Some of our schemes such as Fostering Xtra and IMPACCT also attract a fee in addition to the allowances because the children requiring care under these schemes tend to have more complex needs such as challenging behaviour or disabilities.
Please see the enclosed fact sheet ‘Allowances and Fees’ for current information on the different payments paid to approved carers.

Support groups
Our foster carers are encouraged to attend our local Foster Carers Support Group to talk about their role in an informal setting with other foster carers and workers. This takes place every two months in Irvine and is also attended by guest speakers who have knowledge of the fostering task.

Newsletter
One way we keep in touch with our carers is through our newsletter. This features developments within foster care, forthcoming training opportunities and information about what’s happening within the Family Placement Service. Carers and children have the opportunity to contribute material and information to the newsletter.

Membership of the Fostering Network
We pay an annual membership to the Fostering Network for all our foster carers. This means that all our approved carers are registered as full members and receive all the benefits that this brings. The Fostering Network is the UK’s leading charity for everyone with a personal or professional involvement in fostering. They support foster carers with advice and training on everything from understanding the difficulties a foster child may have, through to advice on money matters relating to fees, allowances and benefits etc.