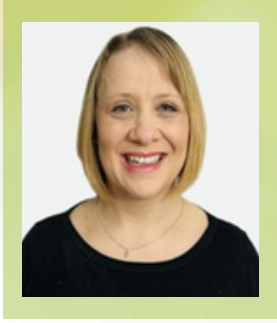


Fostering Solutions South Carers Newsletter



APRIL 2025

**A MESSAGE FROM SOPHIE,
REGISTERED MANAGER**

Hello and welcome to the April newsletter!

As we embrace the warmth of spring, we're seeing the days get longer, flowers start to bloom, and a welcome shift in the weather.

This month also brings the joy of Easter, a time for reflection, renewal, and celebration with loved ones.

Of course as well we have the long weekend and Easter holidays, we hope you have some lovely plans. This month also marks Passover, a time for Jewish communities to come together in celebration of freedom and faith.

April is also a special month for raising awareness by celebrating World Autism Awareness Day on the 2nd. Many of our young people have ASD and raising awareness of this benefits everyone, from individuals with the disorder to those around them, helping families, teachers, and peers better understand and support the unique strengths and challenges of each person.

*Best Wishes,
Sophie*

Events, Celebrations & Special Days in

April

- 1st - April Fool's Day
- 2nd - World Autism Awareness Day
- 9th - Unicorn Day
- 10th - Siblings Day
- 11th - National Pet Day
- 12th - 20th - Passover*
- 13th - National Scrabble Day
- 17th - International Haiku Poetry Day
- 18th - Good Friday
- 20th - Easter Day*
- 21st - Easter Monday
- 22nd - Earth Day
- 23rd - National Shakespeare Day
- 25th - Penguin Day

Passover, or Pesach, is one of the most important festivals in the Jewish calendar, commemorating the anniversary of the Exodus from Egyptian slavery.



The Easter Bunny is believed to have originated from Pagan traditions, for its symbol of fertility and new life, tying into Easter's themes of rebirth and renewal.

Star of the month



BT-M

For her amazing feedback at parent's evening, where she has jumped 5 groups in Art & Design, and she was reported by her Maths teacher to be one of her best students!

Well done BT-M!

Children and carers please keep your nominations coming!

We send each winner a certificate, we want to hear from you if you have something to shout about!



Foster Carer and Children's News

Carer Afternoon Tea!

A small group of our carers had a lovely time celebrating each other in the office over some afternoon tea with the staff. The room was beautifully decorated and lots of baked goods were shared!



Introducing Our New Book Club!

NFG are excited to announce a new therapeutic book club for foster carers! This is a great opportunity to connect, reflect, and engage in meaningful discussions. The first book 'They F You Up' by James Oliver is an insightful exploration of how our upbringing shapes us. If you're interested in joining the first date on **28th April at 12pm-1pm**, please register with Meshak Simpson at Meshak.Simpson@nfa.co.uk. We look forward to reading and discussing with you!



Young Person's Achievement!

JC has recently started attending chess club and he has already won two tournaments so far!



Contact Information

Please find below the contact information for the office and for when you need to contact out of hours.

Office Number for 9am-5pm:
01962 715511

Out of Hours (5pm-9am weekends/bank holidays):

For out-of-hours support, please dial the office number, and you will be automatically transferred to the Supervising Social Worker on Duty.



Shine: For any queries on accessing your Shine or Charms accounts or if you are struggling to access your online training, dial the office number during office hours.

Carer Payments: For any payment enquiries please contact our carer payments team on 01204522667 or carerpaymentsteam@nfa.co.uk

Staff Updates

The 18th March was World Social Work Day, an important day that recognises the hard work, commitment and dedication of our social workers. Sally, Charisse, Fenella, Lianne, Lucy, and Michelle received these beautiful cards, positive affirmation notepads, and pens from Sophie as a thank you for all they do for our families and young people.



Stepladder Plus - Financial & Life Skills Programme for 15-17 year olds



Stepladder Plus is an exciting opportunity for young people who have been in care for at least one year and are aged 15-17. Their aim is to empower young people to take control of their finances, be confident about their future and enhance their employability prospects.

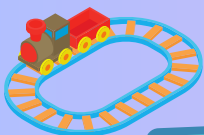
They offer incentivised learning, which means your young person could earn up to £750 paid into their CTF/JISA. To register, get your young person to visit <https://stepladderplus.sharefound.org>.

Charity Toy Drive

Do you or your family have any toys or books for under 5's that you no longer use?

We are looking to collect toy donations for Woodley Pre-School in Romsey, a local charity-run preschool attended by children close to our hearts. Please bring any toys, books, crafts or puzzles to your next support group, hand them to your SSW, or drop them into the office.

Thank you!





Spotlight on: Tracy

Each month, we will shine the spotlight on a different member of staff, and ask them a bunch of questions so you can get to know us better. This month we are shining it on Tracy!



1. What's your name?

Tracy Wilding

2. What's your job role and what do you do on daily bases?

I am the Carer Recruitment Officer and I meet people who are interested in becoming foster carers.

3. If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?

I would like to be strong like Superman so I could help people when needed.

4. What's your favourite type of ice cream, and why is it the best?

I love salted caramel because it's sweet and has crunchy bits of caramel in!

5. If you could be any animal for a day, which one would you pick?

I would like to be an eagle so I could fly high in the sky.

6. What was your favourite toy or game when you were a kid?

I loved reading books, my favourite was the Magic Faraway tree by Enid Blyton.

7. If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Chocolate 😊



8. If you could give one piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be?

Follow all of your dreams, you can do anything you put your mind to if you just believe.

If there are any questions you would like to add, please let us know at adminsouth@fosteringsolutions.com.

****British Exploring Society - NEW Opportunities!****

British Exploring Society have recently released the details of 3 new exciting adventure programmes, which are available to young people from 14 to 19 years of age:

1. Adventure Weekend (camping)

When? Friday 11 April – Sunday 13 April 2025 (2 days and 2 nights)

Where? Cannock Chase, Staffordshire

Age Range? 14 – 19

Meeting Point: Stoke Train Station

Fundraising Challenge? £20



2. Adventure Week (wild camping)

When? Saturday 24 May –

Wednesday 28 May 2025 (5 days and 4 nights)

Where? Dartmoor National Park, Devon

Age Range? 16 – 19

Meeting Point: Plymouth Train Station

Fundraising Challenge? £35



3. Adventure Week (wild camping)

When? Monday 28 July – Fri 1 August 2025 (5 days and 4 nights)

Where? Cairngorms National Park, Scotland

Age Range? 16 – 19

Meeting Point: Edinburgh Train Station

Fundraising Challenge? £35

If you have a young person who would be interested, please let your Supervising Social Worker know or email us at:

adminsouth@fosteringsolutions.com

All kit and train travel to the meeting point is provided



Autism influences how people experience and interact with the world. It is a lifelong neurodivergence and disability. Autism is understood as a spectrum which means each autistic person has a unique combination of characteristics, strengths, and challenges, which can vary a lot. This can also change over time, in different situations or if the person is 'masking'. It is important not to make assumptions about an individual autistic person's skills, abilities or support needs.

Communication



Autistic people may have different communication styles, skills and preferences to non-autistic people. They may use and understand words, tone of voice and body language, such as gesture and facial expressions, differently. Some autistic people have intermittent, unreliable, limited or no speech. They may communicate in other ways, for example: in writing or sign language, through gesture or sounds, or by using picture cards and/or devices.



Behaviours and interests

A lot of professional literature refers to these differences as 'restricted and repetitive behaviours and interests'. They must be seen as affecting 'everyday functioning' for a diagnosis to be made. But many autistic people see these characteristics as positive and helpful. Some prefer to describe them as 'stimming' (stimulatory) or 'self-regulatory' behaviours – ways to keep calm and happy.

These include having or showing:

- focused and dedicated interests (e.g. a very strong passion for a hobby, toy, game)
- repeated movements and behaviour (e.g. hand flapping, hair twirling etc)
- preference for order, predictability or routine (e.g. wanting to know what is going to happen in detail, for rules to be the same for everyone, having the same routine or meals each day)

Sensory processing



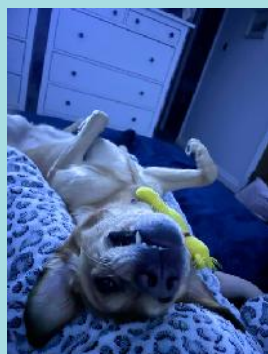
Autistic people can be much more or less sensitive than non-autistic people to the five main senses, and senses for balance, movement, spatial awareness and awareness of internal states (such as hunger and temperature). A person may be very sensitive to one kind of sensory input, but not sensitive to another. Their reactions can also change depending on the situation and environment.



Autism is not a learning disability or a mental health condition. But around a third of autistic people also have a learning disability, and autistic people are more likely to experience mental health problems. If it sounds like you or someone you know, support is available. For more information and resources, visit <https://www.autism.org.uk/>.

National Pet Day - 11th April

Have a look at some of our team's pets this national pet day!



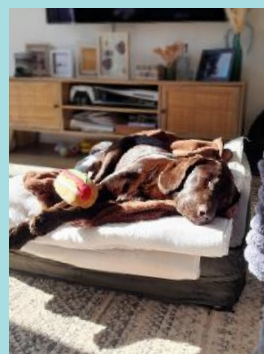
Sophie's dog, Rose



Nika's bunnies,
Benji and Daisy



Anastasia's foster
puppies



Fenella's dog, Mabel



Lianne's cat, Sassy



Safeguarding: WhatsApp



WhatsApp age restriction is 13+. WhatsApp is a convenient and easy way to keep in touch with others. We know that connection to others is really important in terms of our wellbeing, however we need to be aware that there are also some risks to WhatsApp use, particularly for children and young people.

Secrecy and chat lock

Be aware of chat lock. Chat lock is a feature which allows WhatsApp users to keep their chats in a separate locked folder, with its own secret code. This allows users to hide conversations, even if someone checks their phone and messages. This could include messages about harmful behaviours such as self-harm and inappropriate sexual content.

Disappearing content

WhatsApp has a feature which allows messages to be sent and only be viewed once. Unfortunately, this allows users to send inappropriate and abusive content which cannot be re-opened once seen. This means there is no evidence of what has been sent. It also means that if you check your child's phone you won't see a complete picture of what they have viewed.

What can we do?

Teach them to be cautious. Guide them to ask themselves how likely a message from an unknown number is really from someone they know.

Adjust the settings. You can specify who can and cannot add them to group chats. You can do this in settings under the 'Groups' tag.

Talk to them openly without judgement about what they are sharing and how they contribute. Consider with them how they can use group chats safely and that it is okay to exit group chats if they feel uncomfortable.

www.internetmatters.org is a fantastic website with a huge amount of information about internet safety.

Guest Speaker Event

Month: April 17th, 3:30pm

Speaker: Kate Cairns

Session Title: Messages in Behaviour

LIVE
MESSAGES IN BEHAVIOUR
with **Kate Cairns**
Founder of KCA Training

Virtual via Zoom
Thursday 17th April 2025
@ 3:30-5 pm

The CareLeaders
Online

Log in to your
SHINE
account to access this session.

Children & Young People Now
Awards 2023
Winner

Session Highlights:

- 🌟 **Understanding Behaviour:** Delve into how we can recognise the emotions and needs that underpin behaviours, while maintaining our own emotional regulation.
- 👂 **Nonviolent Communication:** Explore Rosenberg's concept of nonviolent communication as a framework for understanding and addressing behaviour.
- 🧠 **Neuroscience Insights:** Gain insights into the neuroscience of emotions and impulses, enhancing your understanding of how these factors influence behaviour.
- 💬 **Interactive Engagement:** Although this session will be primarily one-way due to the online format, we will use the chat function and, depending on attendance, facilitate some live interactions to promote engagement and understanding.

Learning Outcomes

- 💡 **Self-Regulation Skills:** Appreciate the critical role of self-regulation and co-regulation when responding to others' behaviours.
- ⚙️ **Neuroscience of Emotions:** Understand the scientific foundations behind self-regulation and co-regulation interactions, equipping you with the knowledge to apply in practice.
- 🔧 **Empathic Co-Regulation:** Learn from real-life scenarios how empathic co-regulation can enable others to express their emotions and needs more effectively, facilitating a transition from actions to words.
- 🎯 **Practical Tools:** Leave with practical strategies and insights that you can implement in your work, enhancing your ability to support children and young people.
- 🤝 **Collaborative Approach:** Recognise the significance of collaboration in fostering an environment where emotional needs can be communicated and understood.

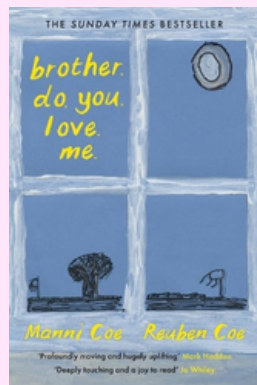
This session is a must for professionals seeking to deepen their understanding of behaviour management and emotional regulation in their practice. Join us for this unique opportunity to learn from Kate Cairns, a dedicated leader in the field.

Recommendations



Book Recommendation

brother. do. you. love. me.
- Manni Coe and Reuben Coe



Profoundly affecting and powerful, the Coe brothers' joint memoir documents the steady rebuilding of their sibling relationship after Manni takes the struggling Reuben out of his care home and they set up home together in the countryside.

Reuben, aged 38, was living in a home for adults with learning disabilities and struggling to accept that he had Down's syndrome. Depressed and in a fog of antidepressants, he hadn't spoken for over a year. Increasingly isolated, cut off from everyone and everything he loved, Reuben sent a text message: 'brother. do. you. love. me.'

When Manni received this desperate message from his youngest brother, he knew everything had to change. Together they began an extraordinary journey of repair, rediscovering the depths of their brotherhood, one gradual step at a time. Combining Manni's tender words with Reuben's compelling illustrations, their story of hope and resilience questions how we care for those we love and draws a moving portrait of the power of brotherly love.

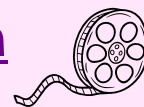
Website Recommendation



www.earthday.org/

Earthday.org offers fantastic resources to help you get involved in protecting our planet. Whether you're looking for ways to reduce waste, plant trees, or learn more about environmental issues, there's something for everyone. Visit for ideas and inspiration to make a positive impact on our world!

Tv Recommendation



Adolescence - Netflix



Adolescence tells the story of how a family's world is turned upside down when 13-year-old Jamie Miller (Owen Cooper) is arrested for the murder of a teenage

girl who goes to his school. Each episode is filmed in one unflinching and continuous shot. The gripping story unfolds in real time as the main characters — from the central family to the detectives investigating the crime — search for answers in the wake of a shocking tragedy. Who is actually responsible? Why did it happen? Could it have been prevented?

App Recommendation

GET
YOUR
GUIDE

Get your Guide



Whether you are going away this Easter break or just looking for something to do last-minute, Get your Guide can make booking tours, day trips, and activities easier than ever. You can use the app as a travel planner or for travel guidance, and then book the experiences all in one place.

Podcast Recommendation



**TED talk:
Chimamanda Ngozi
Adichie: The danger
of a single story**

Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice -- and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.

Support Groups - April 2025

Support groups are a great chance to be able to chat to other Foster Carers in your area and discuss ideas, support you may need, or ask questions you may have with your Supervising Social Worker.

Casey will be attending support groups and we look forward to seeing you there!



Fareham & Gosport with Charisse

23rd April 10am
Bayside Cabin, Stokes
Bay Road, Gosport,
PO12 2QT

Gloucestershire with sister agency

17th April 12pm
The Highwayman Inn,
Beech Pike, Cheltenham,
GL53 9PH

Southampton with Lianne

No meeting this month

Chichester with Lucy

No meeting this month

Basingstoke with Michelle

No meeting this month

Oxford with Fenella

16th October
The Light, Banbury
OX16 2PA



Recommend Us!

People that you refer to us often go on to become foster carers. We want to acknowledge the contribution you make to growing our family of carers and the 'Recommend Us' scheme aims to do just that.

Once the person you have recommended has been approved at panel, you will receive a loyalty payment of £1500* on your next appropriate allowance date. You will also receive a Love2Shop voucher just for getting us in touch with someone.

*Speak to our Carer Recruitment Officer,
Tracy, for more details:
Tracy.Wilding@fosteringsolutions.com

Here is some feedback from one of our Foster Carers. Thank you so much, it means a lot.

'The agency has been amazing, yet again this year. Our social worker is always available or calls back and is a constant source of information. Everyone we come in to contact with is always enormously helpful and encouraging.'

Youth Council

In Youth Council, children meet other people who are in care, and share their experiences with each other. They can give their views on different topics and we will make sure their ideas come to life.

We welcome foster children and birth children and send all new members a welcome pack!



If you have a child/young person (any age considered) who would like to join us then please get in touch with Casey. The date of the next meeting is TBC.

Welcome packs have been sent out to the young people on board! Here is a photo of one of the packs we have sent (they include a welcome letter, lanyard with card, pen, keyring, notebook and some sweets).



What do you think of our newsletters?

We would love to hear your honest thoughts on this newsletter. If there's anything you'd like to see that's not on here, email us on adminsouth@fosteringsolutions.com, or alternatively fill in our anonymous survey by following this link:

<https://forms.office.com/e/ygY4xxtESB>

Please join us at

Exbury Gardens

to meet other foster carers and enjoy the bluebells and
daffodils in the beautiful gardens!

Wednesday 7th May at 11am-2pm

Exbury Gardens, Summer Lane, Exbury, Southampton SO45 1AZ

Bring your own picnic (weather permitting)

Hot drink / ice cream included!



For foster carers only

RSVP Tracy Wilding: 07385381223