

## Remand fostering

Action for Children has been providing remand fostering and alternatives to custody placements for over 19 years. Our projects provide and maintain specialist foster placements offering a high-level of support and help for young people in meeting their court order conditions.

Remand fostering offers a safe environment for an alleged offender while they await trial or sentencing. During this time, the alleged offender must not be involved in offending, anti-social behaviour or absconding, and should attend court at the required times remand fostering assists the young person to achieve these goals and provides an alternative to secure or custodial accommodation for young people awaiting trial or sentencing.

### How remand fostering works

Similar to intensive fostering, work is undertaken over a much shorter timeframe, with the average period on remand just six weeks.

Action for Children advocates for the children placed, aiming to create a multi-agency response to areas where difficulties are being experienced. This is achieved by regular planning and reviewing in partnership with YOTs, local authorities, CAMHS, the courts and approved specialist foster carers. Young people are encouraged to participate in planning and to give feedback on their placement.



### The benefits of remand fostering

An independent evaluation of the Action for Children Wessex Community Project's remand fostering scheme found that it had consistently impressive outcomes:

- 75 per cent of young people did not re-offend while in placement
- all the young people were engaged in school, training or employment by the time they left the placement



### So why not put young people who offend in custody?

The rise in the use of custody for children and young people is a real concern. Action for Children does not believe that custody adequately addresses the needs and behaviours of young people who offend; it certainly has not been successful in reducing re-offending rates, with statistics show that over 78 per cent of young people released from custody re-offending within 12 months. Custody for young people should be used as a last resort, and only then for the small number who are a risk to themselves or to others.

### Fostering solutions for young people who offend – looking forward

Currently, intensive fostering and remand fostering are only available to small numbers of children and young people.

Action for Children believes that intensive and remand fostering offer real solutions for troubled young people and, if more readily available, would make a real impact on the number of young people who enter custody.

Action for Children believes that the current financial disincentives for Children's Services departments to provide these fostering placements need to be addressed. Currently, when a young person is remanded into secure or custodial accommodation, the YJB pays for the provision; fostering placements, on the other hand, are traditionally paid for by the local authority. The intensive fostering pilots are currently funded by the YJB, and future funding arrangements, if the provision is mainstreamed, will need to be arranged in a way that doesn't act as a disincentive to alternative approaches.

Action for Children is also interested in developing our models further and learning from our experience to continue to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and young people.

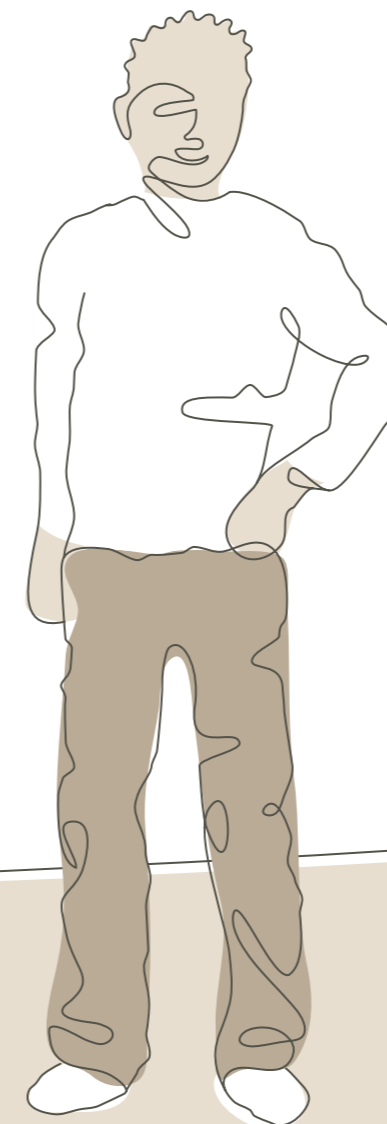
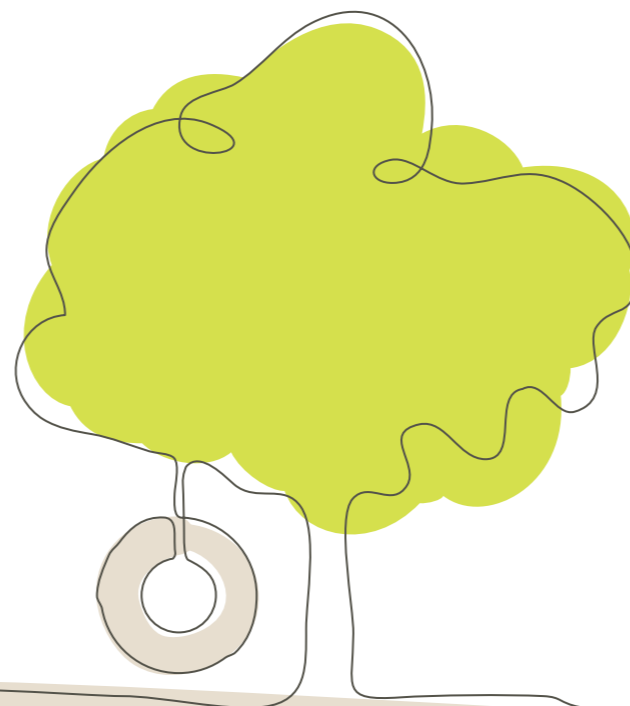
Action for Children is committed to helping the most vulnerable children and young people in the UK break through injustice, deprivation and inequality, so they can achieve their full potential.

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# Achieving transformation: fostering solutions for young people who offend



as long as it takes

# Action for Children: fostering solutions for young people who offend

Action for Children understands that for some young people, a difficult home life can directly contribute to their negative behaviour. Providing these young people with a safe and stable environment Action for Children can help to turn their lives around.

Working with the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales, Action for Children provides intensive fostering, remand and post-custody fostering to support those with a high level of offending behaviour, help them to

overcome a range of difficulties and give them clear boundaries through supervision, and trained and supported carers.

Action for Children has long-standing experience of delivering fostering solutions to young people who offend. The support is making a real difference to the lives of vulnerable young people, playing a fundamental role helping to steer them away from offending behaviour and towards positive life achievements.

## Intensive fostering

Intensive fostering is a highly effective programme helping to turn around the lives of vulnerable young people with extensive criminal histories.

In 2004, the Government asked the YJB to tender a feasibility study into intensive fostering using a model developed in Oregon, USA, Action for Children now runs two of the three pilots for intensive fostering (in Wessex and London) that have been funded, commissioned and supported by the YJB. Intensive fostering was noted by the Youth Crime Action Plan as a positive option for reducing re-offending.



### How intensive fostering works

Intensive fostering needs the commitment of a multi-disciplinary team working to support the young person. Basic principles include:

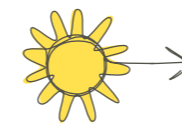
- Assessment for suitability – Prior to being considered for intensive fostering, each young person is assessed to see if they are likely to benefit from the scheme. This happens during a six-week adjournment when the court is willing to consider an alternative to a custodial sentence. If considered suitable, the young person placed with a carer directly from court. The carer is assessed, approved and specially trained. The placement and support is provided for up to 12 months. This programme is not suitable for first offences.
- Monitored points system to reinforce positive behaviour – intensive fostering is a highly structured programme tailored to the needs of the individual. Points are awarded on a daily basis according to how well young people behave and whether they have done everything expected of them as outlined in their behaviour modification programme. If they behave well, they are awarded privileges; if they don't behave well, privileges are taken away.

- Fair and consistent boundaries through initial 24/7 supervision – During the first three weeks, the programme is very restrictive, with no unsupervised time, or use of TV or computer games in the bedroom, but as points are earned for good behaviour, the child graduates to the next level and gains privileges accordingly.
- Positive role models – The programme attempts to surround the young person with positive role models and mentors. At the same time, young people are isolated from negative peers and taught the skills needed for good social interaction.
- Academic skills and work habits are encouraged – Young people are expected to engage with education, training or employment.
- Foster carers are trained and supported on a daily basis – The foster carers are in daily contact with the programme supervisor to ensure implementation and to identify areas of tension before they escalate, and to take decisions on behalf of the foster carer to remove any conflict in the carer and young person's relationship.
- Work with family – The team engages with the family of the young person to help ensure a smooth transition when they return home.

### Who we work with

We work with young people:

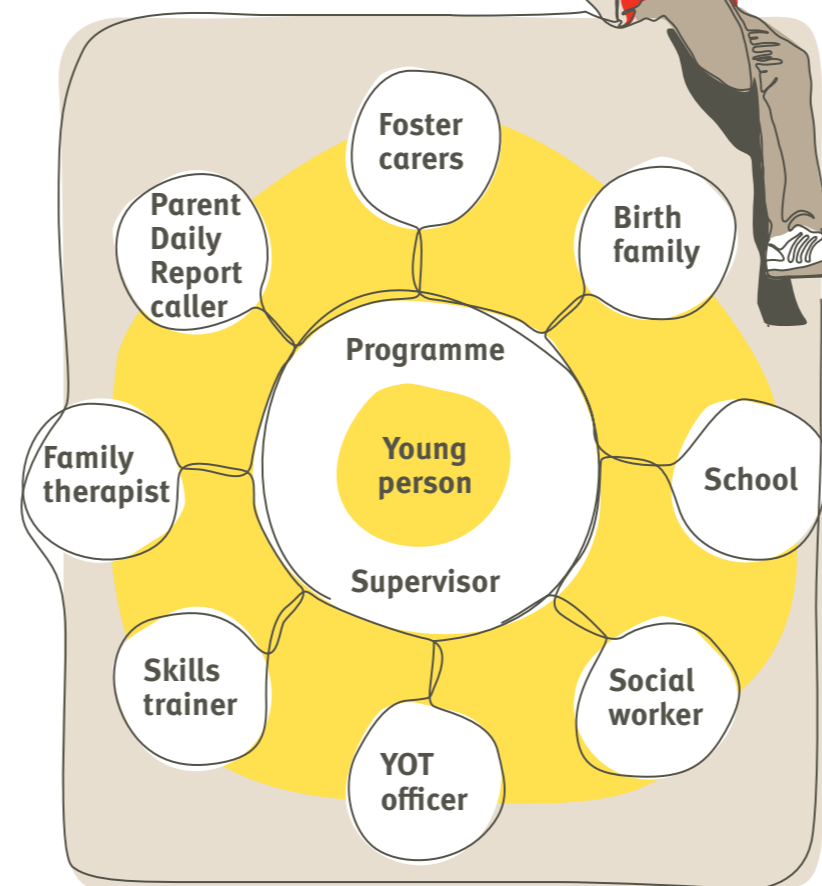
- aged 10 to 17
- whose home circumstances may have contributed significantly to their behaviour
- when they have reached the custody threshold
- offering the programme as an alternative to custodial sentences



### The benefits of intensive fostering

The outcomes from Action for Children's projects have been outstanding. An internal audit revealed that our services have :

- reduced re-offending and helping young people to overcome their difficulties, such as offending behaviour, substance misuse and relationship problems
- reduced substance misuse
- re-established positive links with birth families
- increased access to education, training and employment
- decreased anti-social behaviour



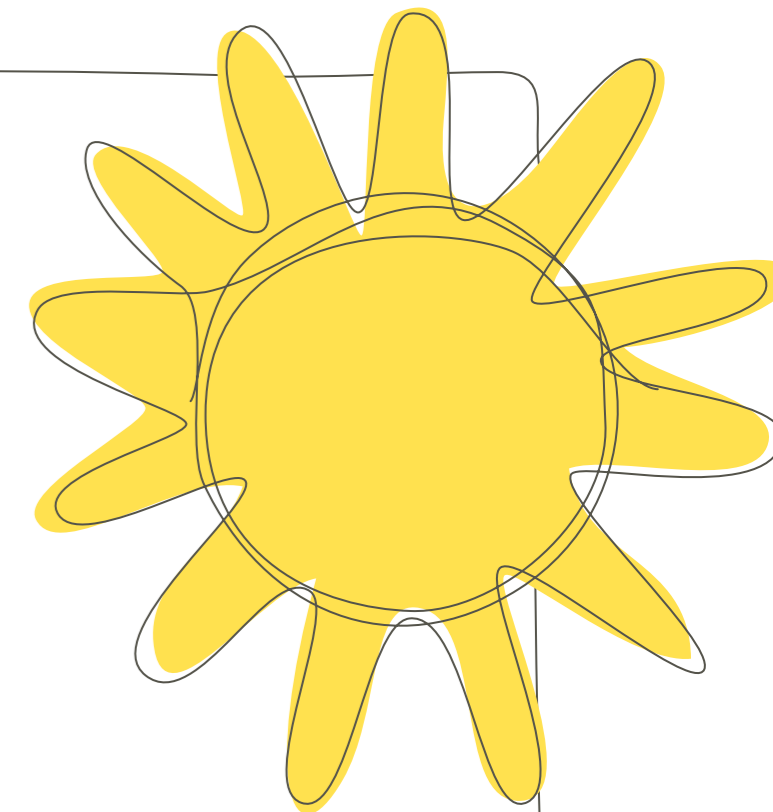
### Action for Children Wessex Community Project – Intensive Fostering

Action for Children Wessex Community Project had their first young person in an intensive fostering placement by March 2006.

To date, 12 young people have graduated from the programme, fulfilling every requirement. All the young people have been in school, training or employment at the point of graduation, with the majority of young people moving on to suitable accommodation. The majority of young people who successfully graduated are now in full-time education, with many attending mainstream schools, training or full-time employment.

None of the young people who have successfully graduated has been found guilty of an offence committed while on the programme, with the majority of young people not committing offences after graduation.

Families have also given very positive feedback about the programme and how Action for Children works with them.



### Stephen's story

Stephen was 14 when he began his intensive fostering placement in January 2006. He had been sentenced to a two-year supervision order, with the first year in an intensive fostering placement. Stephen had already been living with his foster carer for seven months while on remand.

Stephen was a persistent young offender, was not attending school and had a history of self-harm and suicidal tendencies. He is the fifth child in a family of seven, with four of his older siblings already known to the carer.

With the help of his carer and Action for Children, Stephen attended mainstream school and achieved 11 GCSE passes, nine of which were B and C grade, including

maths and English. He gained an award for the 'most significant achievement in education of a looked-after child' and became a school prefect with special responsibility for counselling year 7 students.

Those who worked with Stephen feel that custody would have increased the risks to him through depression and re-offending. Instead, Stephen achieved outstanding GCSE results and now has a wide range of friends who do not offend. He also enjoys a realistic relationship with his family seeing them on a regular basis.