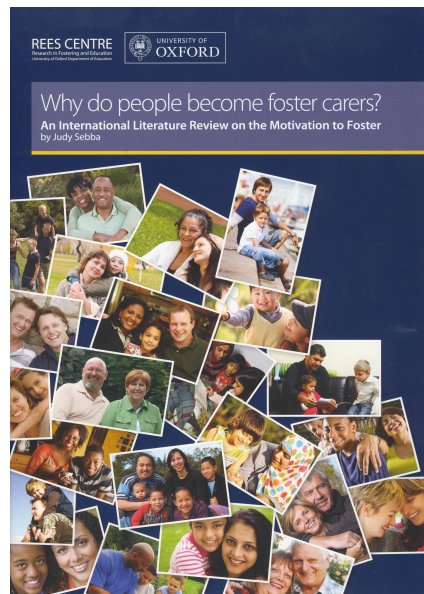
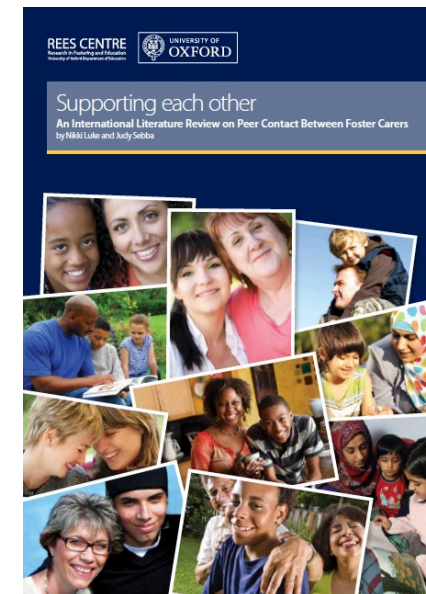


Recruiting foster carers



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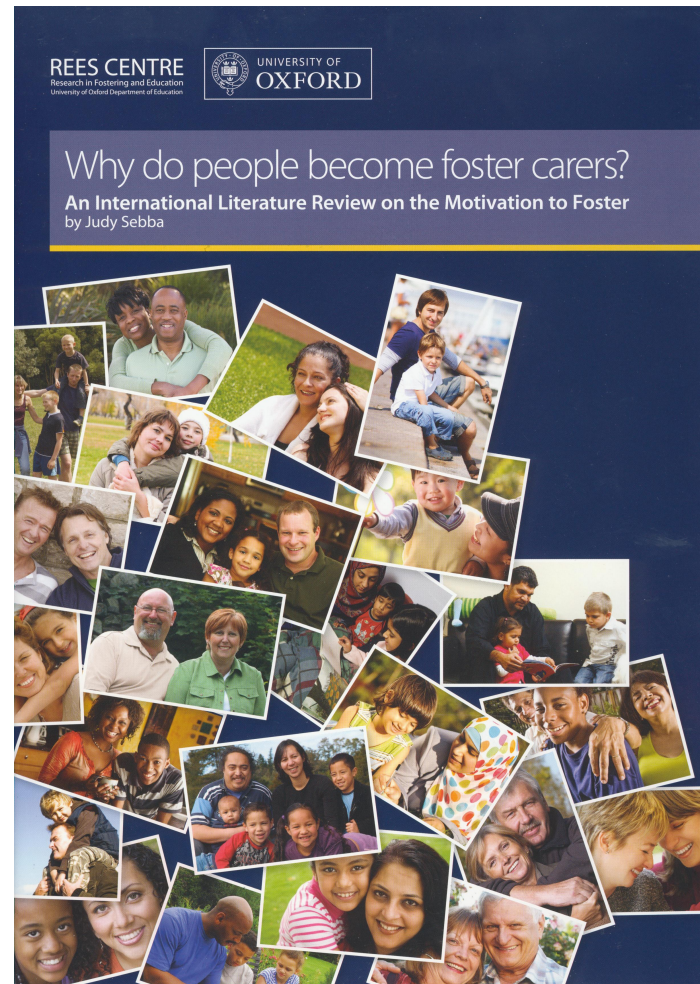
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What are your priorities?

- Recruitment and retention of carers
- Effective support for foster carers
- Impact of fostering on carers' own children
- Addressing allegations against foster carers?
- Others?

Recruitment of foster carers: motivation to foster



Recruitment of foster carers: The motivation to foster research

10 fostering providers asked people who had inquired about fostering if they were willing to be involved in research project.

The aims were to identify:

- what motivates people to inquire about fostering;
- what works well and what could be improved in the process from initial inquiry to approval;
- why people drop out of this process when they do so.

Recruitment of foster carers: The motivation to foster research

What we did:

- Interviewers (who are foster carers) interviewed 102 people about the factors that led to them inquiring about fostering;
- 38 follow up interviews were done 8-12 months later;
- Follow up interviews of 17 people who withdrew.

Motivation to foster: main findings

Initial motivation to become a foster carer:

- Prior experience of working with children
- 'Knowing' an existing foster carer
- Own children grown up, 'empty nest'
- Local advertising
- Money rarely mentioned as an initial motivator

Motivation to foster: main findings

Main **qualities**: patience, tolerance, empathy, understanding, sense of humour;

Main **challenges**: finance, difficult behaviour, providing affection appropriately.

- **Approval rate** ranged from 2-12% of those who inquired (only some of these actually applied), an of average 5%;
- **Time taken from application to approval** ranged 5-15 months, with an average of 9.5 months.

What would help you make a decision?	Percentage
Talking to foster carers	49
Open evenings/Support groups	31
Information about payment	6
Amount of support from provider	4
General training/learning	6
Decision to go ahead already cleared	4

Talking to foster carers early on in the process is 'perhaps too scary'

Findings about the application process

- A small number of applicants, mainly those who had previously worked with children, viewed the process as positive – they accepted the long time it took to process their application as necessary to ensure safety, plenty of support available;
- Most applicants complained about:
 - delays;
 - paperwork;
 - intrusion into privacy.
- Many complaints about inconsistent information about:
 - a) bedrooms; b) employment;
- Also complained that too much focus on their relationship with their partner rather than their capacity to provide for a child.

Recommendations

- Involve existing carers in recruitment and ongoing;
- Local advertising is effective;
- Target those with experience of working with children and whose own children have grown up;
- Prepare applicants better by explaining the process at the start including the need for intrusive questioning and delays;
- Clarify any misunderstandings related to other employment allowed and allocation to bedrooms.