

Charity issues plea for new foster families in Scotland

Record numbers of fostered children mean that at least 850 new foster families are needed across Scotland in 2014, according to leading charity Fostering Network.

Due to increased demand, almost 5,300 children are living with over 4,375 foster families across Scotland. More foster families are needed not only to replace the 12 per cent who leave each year, but also to ensure that children who come into foster care are provided for immediately with carers who are right for them and have the skills and qualities they need to give children a secure, loving home.

The most sought-after foster families are those who can provide homes for teenagers, children with disabilities and sibling groups. Without enough foster families willing and able to offer homes to these groups, some children will find themselves separated from their siblings, living away from family, school and friends or being placed with a foster carer who does not have the ideal skills and experience to meet their specific needs.

Research by the Fostering Network in 2013 found that in the previous two years a third of foster carers had felt under pressure to take children – usually teenagers – who they were not trained or supported to look after. Many fostering relationships are broken down as a result of an unsuitable match between foster family and child. The Fostering Network hopes that a wider pool of foster carers will make it more likely that fostering services can find the right foster home for each child at the first attempt.

Sara Lurie, director of the Fostering Network Scotland, said:-
“Children and young people come into care for a wide range of

reasons, but all come needing professional, dedicated and compassionate support. Foster carers are remarkable people who open their homes to some of society's most disadvantaged children and young people.

"Fostering services are working really hard to find more foster carers, but recruitment remains an ongoing challenge. We need to attract a diverse range of foster carers who can meet the needs of children in care and who can offer as much choice as possible so that they can find the right home for each child, first time.

"We urgently need people who believe that they have the right skills and qualities to foster to come forward and make a long lasting positive difference to the life of a child. In particular, foster carers are needed to provide homes for teenagers and children with disabilities, and to help sibling groups stay together."

Details about how to become a foster parent in Edinburgh are on the council website [here](#).

Details of fostering services and more information about fostering and becoming a foster carer are available from couldyoufoster.org.uk