



Reference: FOI-717

**Request:**

A 2021 Ofsted report warned:

“The number of foster carers in England has only increased by 4% since 2014, while the number of children in foster care has increased some 11%. And while the number of fostering households and carers has gone up, Ofsted research suggests that the range of carers available aren’t always able to meet children’s increasingly complex needs.”

Since the Ofsted report, the cost of living crisis has impacted particularly hard on disabled people, including children, and those who support them, partly because of additional needs, including specialist equipment which may require power.

Academic research has also found that specialist foster care for disabled children and young people reaps dividends for them, but that foster carers can struggle with increased costs of support, difficulties in navigating the benefits system and accessing appropriate care.

1. Please provide figures for the number of children in your area in foster care who have additional needs, such as SEN, or who are described as having a disability and provide those figures from 2019-2022 inclusive.
2. Please provide figures for the number of foster carers in your area providing care for children and young people who have such additional needs from 2019-2022 inclusive.
3. Please give details of the reasons that foster carers quitting the sector have given your council from 2019-2022, with particular emphasis on reasons around not enough support, financial and otherwise, for their work with children and young people with additional needs.

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**Response:**

1. 2019: 34  
2020: 29  
2021: 37  
2022: 51
2. 2019: 53  
2020: 51  
2021: 50  
2022: 44
3. The Authority has had no indication from our foster carers that they have resigned due to a lack of support, perceived or otherwise. Foster carers have resigned due to retirement or offering Staying Put/Shared Lives care arrangements to young people who are transitioning to independence.

The Authority has recently improved our financial offer to our foster carers, bringing our allowances in line with recommended levels as advised by the Fostering Network. In addition, our foster carers receive a Fostering fee which is based on their skills and experience.

The Authority has improved its support offer to our foster carers with the recent launch of its first Mockingbird constellation and a further commitment to launch an additional two constellations in 2023. This is in addition to the out of hours Emergency Duty team.

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