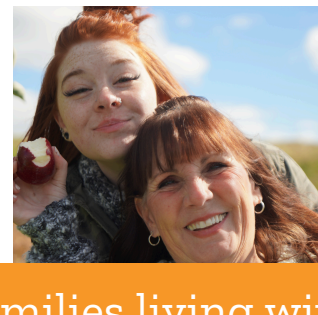
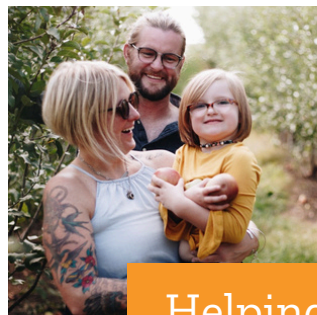




## Fostering Services for Commissioning Authorities and Agencies



Helping children and families living with trauma.  
Nurturing attachment. Transforming lives.

## Introducing Families Empowered

Children and their families are always at the heart of our work. With understanding and expertise, we offer effective, insightful training services and therapeutic interventions for foster carers and agency professionals to support a meaningful trauma-informed approach.

### Driven by dedication and experience

Families Empowered is led by Deborah Sharratt, Director of Therapeutic Services and company founder.



Deborah is a DDP Practitioner (becoming certified) and holds an MA in Advanced Social Work. She has over 25 years' experience across children's services, with a specialism in fostering and adoption.

At Families Empowered, Deborah has built a team of skilled practitioners, with an extensive shared background in social work and children's services and immersed in the principles of an attachment-focussed therapeutic approach.

We are proud to be recognised as an 'Outstanding Provider' of Adoption Support Services by Ofsted.

### Transformative support for foster carers

We work with you to identify training and interventions with a therapeutic mindset that can support your foster carers and improve placement stability. Our services can be tailored for all carers, from those just starting out to experienced fostering professionals.

Darren Harman-Page, our Fostering Services Development Lead, has been a foster carer and fostering advocate for over 25 years and brings real-life knowledge and insight to his role. He has seen first hand how a therapeutic mindset can dramatically improve a foster carer's relationship with a child in care, whilst building understanding of early-life trauma and their confidence to cope.

“ We work with foster carers to help them develop insight, build resilience and strengthen relationships – improving both their confidence and placement stability. ”

Deborah Sharratt

## Nurturing therapies for children living with trauma

Our therapeutic services are informed by the principles of Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) and PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy), developed by clinical psychologist, Dan Hughes, alongside research in neurobiology.

DDP is a therapy model developed for the treatment of children who have experienced abuse and neglect and who demonstrate ongoing problems related to attachment and trauma.

PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that helps a child to feel safe and is based on how nurturing parents connect with a very young infant.

## Flexible, reliable and responsive

We develop trusted and supportive relationships with all our clients, with an emphasis on reliability, flexibility and responsiveness.

We understand the challenges inherent in fostering and alternative care and work collaboratively with local authorities and agencies to develop effective, timely and tailored service proposals that represent excellent value.

Our services can be offered in person, online or a hybrid model combining the best of both.

## Fostering Services From Families Empowered

We currently offer three main areas of support for fostering agencies:

- **training** – from multi-day programmes to Bitesize sessions
- **therapeutic intervention** consultations
- **assessments** (Form F reports)

Our flexible approach means we can adapt our existing services and pioneer new ones through a responsive working relationship with our clients.

Training Services

Bitesize Sessions

Therapeutic Services

Assessments

## Training Services Tailored to Your Needs

Our wide range of attachment-focussed, specialist training offers effective support for foster carers to promote a therapeutic mindset and improve skills, understanding and placement stability.

We include a **free consultation** upfront to better understand your requirements. Our 'listen first' approach helps us to work with you to develop bespoke training solutions that prioritise learning outcomes that make a real difference.

Our selection of training programmes can be adapted for foster carers at any stage and illustrates our approach. We also offer new training development in collaboration with our clients and tailored to their specific needs.

All training can be delivered in person or online. Timings are typically 10am-1pm to enable foster carers to manage school run and other responsibilities, but we can adapt timings as required to maximise attendance and engagement.

Therapeutic Mindset

Introduction to  
Attachment Theory

Managing Challenging  
Behaviour with PACE

Blocked Care

Therapeutic Life Story Work

Transitions and  
Endings for Children

Play Techniques to Support  
Therapeutic Parenting

Therapeutic Parenting  
Group Programme

Disability Awareness

Disclosures Training



## Developing a Therapeutic Mindset

1 day (typically 10am-1pm) / In person or online

Foster carers will learn how developmental trauma affects the child's emotional and social development and impacts their behaviour. They will be introduced to PACE as a therapeutic parenting model that underpins a range of interventions they can use with the child.

## Understanding and Recovering from Compassion Fatigue

1 day (typically 10am-1pm) / In person or online

The course offers a reminder of how histories of trauma and loss affect the children who come into foster care and how blocked trust develops neurobiologically.

Foster carers will learn what causes compassion fatigue (also known as blocked care) and how it can impact a carer, including how to recognise the signs they are in blocked care, as well as looking at strategies for recovery and preventative measures.

## Introduction to Attachment Theory

1 day (typically 10am-1pm) / In person or online

The course covers attachment theory and its links to child development and neurobiology, looking at the factors which may contribute to the development of a secure or insecure attachment and how this impacts on the emotional, cognitive and social development of children.



## Transitions and Endings for Children with Relational Trauma

1 day (typically 10am-1pm) / In person or online

Foster carers will explore the effect of change and consider the impact of endings, transitions and micro transitions on children who have experienced early relational loss and trauma.

They will build their knowledge and confidence in understanding the behaviour of traumatised children and how to help them manage transitions and endings using a therapeutic mindset. We also examine the ongoing impact of this on their caregivers.

## Managing Challenging Behaviour with PACE

1 day (typically 10am-1pm) / In person or online

Foster carers will gain a deeper understanding of how early life relational trauma can impact on the developing maturity of the child and to respond to their child based on emotional maturity and not chronological age.

We will explore how to use PACE to manage behaviour, de-escalate anger and respond to coercive patterns of behaviour.

## Therapeutic Life Story Work

1 day (typically 10am-1pm) / In person or online

Based on the work of Richard Rose but with a DDP-led approach, this course is in-person only due to its emphasis on interaction.

Foster carers will learn the theory behind Therapeutic Life Story Work and how they can best support a child in their care who is participating in this process. They will understand how their ongoing relationship as foster carer will also become a part of the child's life story.

Foster carers will explore non-verbal and creative art techniques to help children express difficult and complex feelings.



## Play Techniques to Support Therapeutic Parenting

1 day (typically 10am-1pm) / In person or online

Foster carers will learn how to use therapeutic play techniques to build connections with the child and recreate positive baby experiences for children who missed out on early loving care.

They will gain a foundation in how playful and responsive care techniques can help a child build a more secure attachment and encourage a positive view of themselves and others.



## Therapeutic Parenting Group Programme

6 days / In person or online / 12 participants max

This post-approval therapeutic group programme provides vital support in helping foster carers develop knowledge, skills and confidence in parenting a troubled child who has experienced early life trauma.

Foster carers will gain a deeper understanding of the effects of early life trauma on infants and children and its impact on their behaviours. They will learn how to use PACE to help manage challenging behaviours and improve placement stability.

We also promote a better understanding of the effects of secondary trauma and blocked care, with emphasis on the importance of looking after yourself.

The group format offers a non-judgemental therapeutic space to explore both theory and practice with other foster carers and with the expert support of our therapeutic training practitioners.

## Disability Awareness Training

1 day (typically 10am-1pm) / In person or online

Caring for a child with physical disabilities, medical conditions or learning difficulties can be a very rewarding role for a foster carer.

This training will build confidence across a range of areas to help foster carers support a child with additional needs to live life to the fullest

This training explores:

- the impact of early life trauma on child's development
- consideration of how disability affects child, carers and wider family members
- awareness of bullying, exploitation and abuse risks
- managing time spent with birth family
- navigating adolescence and transition to adulthood.

## Disclosures Training

1 day (typically 10am-1pm) / In person or online

Foster carers will explore the complex and sensitive issues involved in the care of children who have been abused.

They will learn how to respond to any disclosures of abuse with sensitivity, using a therapeutic mindset, whilst also able to work confidently within their agency's procedural framework and adhere to safeguarding good practice.





# Introducing Bitesize Training Sessions

Short online training sessions developed for carers of children living with early life trauma and loss.

Each key topic has been adapted into 'bite-sized' training to offer guidance, insight and support around parenting therapeutically – perfect as a refresher and to deepen confidence and understanding.

Bitesize sessions are 90 minutes and include a Q&A at the end. They are a cost-effective and convenient way to reach larger groups of foster carers from the convenience of their homes whilst introducing key insights and strategies.

We can adapt any training into a Bitesize session, simply call us for a consultation to identify the topics most helpful for your foster carers.

The Amazing Adolescent Brain

Managing an 'Explosive' Child

Children Who Don't Trust  
(Exploring Blocked Trust)

Parenting Children with  
Shame-Based Behaviours

PACE Refresher

Play Techniques to Support  
Therapeutic Parenting

Life Story Work

## Therapeutic Support Services

Our attachment-focussed therapeutic services are based on the principles of DDP and PACE and aim to create trust and a sense of safety for the child, whilst supporting the foster carer working with them.

### Therapeutic Interventions for Foster Carers

From DDP family therapy, early placement interventions and therapeutic parenting support to psychodynamic counselling and Theraplay®-informed therapy, we provide transformative therapeutic support to help foster carers cope better and work more effectively with the children in their care.

We offer interventions for individuals, families and groups. For more information about therapeutic work with foster carers, please contact us for an initial consultation.



### Foster Carer 1-1 Consultations

Where a foster carer needs more targeted support, we offer a 1-1 Consultation with our Fostering Services Development Lead, Darren Harman-Page, who is a highly experienced foster carer and fostering advocate and is trained to DDP Level One.

This consultation will identify where the foster carer needs additional therapeutic support to prevent placement breakdown, whilst also offering the carer the opportunity to explore challenging issues in a non-judgemental space with someone who shares real, lived experience of caring for children and young people.

A summary report will detail any recommendations for further interventions that may help stabilise the placement and retain the foster carer's service and commitment.

# Prospective Foster Carer Report

Rigorously researched, insightful and evidence-based assessments are essential for good decision making. Our experienced assessors are registered with Social Work England and are supervised, trained and supported by Families Empowered.

When a person or couple makes an application to become a foster carer, they will be required to go through extensive safeguarding checks, medical checks, a comprehensive assessment and preparatory fostering training.

The Prospective Foster Carer Report (Form F) seeks to assess and reflect the work that has been done with applicants to prepare them for the task of fostering and to convey to the fostering panel the essence of the applicants and their family.

The assessment report is a means to an end and not an end in itself.

The assessment will provide the fostering panel with a:

- comprehensive report on the prospective **foster carer's life story**
- consideration of their **reasons for becoming a foster carer**
- clear identification of the **skills and qualities** they will bring to the role of a foster carer.

**Form F Reports include:**

- All meetings and interviews with prospective foster carer candidate/s
- Written report completed **within 12 weeks** of initial commission date confirmed with local authority or as otherwise agreed.

## Contact Us

Our friendly, professional team is here to help with all enquiries. For further information about any of our therapeutic or training services for foster carers, please contact Darren or Debbie.



### Fostering Services Development Lead

Darren Harman-Page

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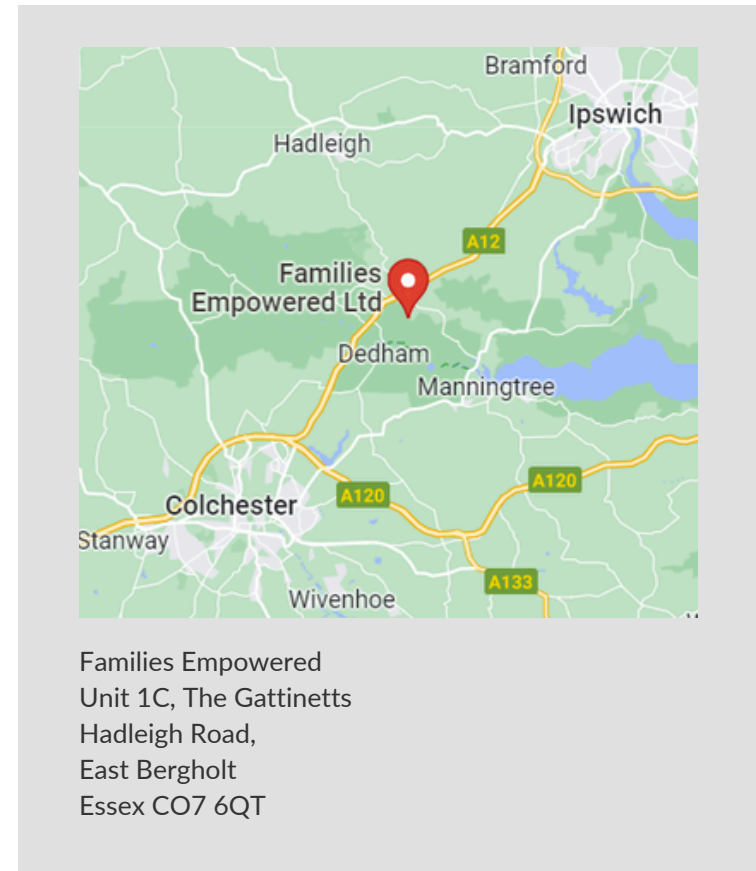


### Director

Deborah Sharratt

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