

Supporting vulnerable children to thrive

A provider of foster care is calling for potential carers open to 'a life-changing experience'.

It's comforting to think that all children and young people have a safe place to call home, with parents who can meet their needs. Sadly, this is not the case for many children and young people.

Issues such as intergenerational trauma, socioeconomic disadvantage, substance misuse and mental ill-health can sometimes impact a parent's capacity to ensure a safe environment for their children, and this is when foster carers and agencies can be required.

"Parents generally do their best for their children," says James Isles, state director, NSW and Norfolk Island, for Key Assets Australia. "But some have challenges that prevent them being able to provide a safe home. This is how children wind up in the foster care system and with agencies such as ours."

Key Assets provides foster care, family support services and disability services for vulnerable children, youth and families across Australia. In NSW, it has offices in Newcastle, Botany and Blacktown.

The ultimate goal of foster care is restoration with the birth parents or family. When that isn't possible, "then we are looking for permanency options, so that's adoption, guardianship or long-term foster care," says Isles.

In NSW, where Key Assets has been operating for more than 10 years, there are about 16,000 children requiring foster care.



As a result, foster care agencies are looking for a diversity of people to be foster carers, with the main qualification being a genuine commitment to providing nurturing care for children and young people.

"As a non-government, not-for-profit and non-religious agency, we don't exclude anyone from consideration," says Larissa McPeake, Key Assets' recruitment and panel manager.

While, historically, being single and childless or in a same-sex relationship, for example, may have been a barrier to becoming a foster carer, this is no longer the case. Carers of all ages and backgrounds are welcomed, and in locations across the state.

While foster carers have tended to be needed for long-term care, "there's now a

significant shortage of emergency and short-term carers as well," says Isles. "So, there are many ways in which members of the community can help."

"We'd love to hear from anyone who's interested and can provide stability and consistent care. Our recruitment team can take people through the process, requirements and eligibility," explains McPeake. A quick quiz on the group's website is a helpful first step.

Foster carers participate in a comprehensive assessment to be approved, which can take up to four months. Key Assets is a child safe organisation, so this includes undertaking criminal and working-with-children checks.

'Once children feel more settled, secure, safe in foster care, that's when you start seeing them flourish.'

James Isles

Key Assets provides foster care and other supports for vulnerable people.

In the same way that carers provide support to children and young people, the foster carers themselves are able to access 24/7 support and a dedicated social worker, along with ongoing training.

"We place a high emphasis on that," says Isles, adding that taking on the role of foster carer can be a life-changing experience.

Being removed from home and family is a very disruptive experience for children coming into care. "Once children feel more settled, secure, safe in foster care, that's when you start seeing them flourish," says Isles.

"This is why we work with our carers so they can provide the love, safety and care that we know will make a positive difference to children's lives."

Could you be a Foster Carer?

We'll work with you to make a positive and lasting difference to the lives of children in your community.

As a Key Assets Foster Carer we'll provide you with:

-  24/7 support
-  dedicated social worker
-  on-going training

If you can provide love, safety and care for a child, we'd love to hear from you.



Scan me

THINKING ABOUT FOSTER CARE OR OPEN ADOPTION?
Listen to real stories from our amazing Foster Carers

keyassets.org.au | 1800 932 273 | Key Assets

keyassets
SERVICE WITH PRIDE