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| **news release** **16 July 2024** **West Sussex joins regional partnership to recruit more foster carers** West Sussex County Council has joined others from across the South East to create the country’s largest local authority fostering partnership, in a bid to increase the number of foster carers across the region.With over 11,000 children in care across the South East, and fewer than 3,000 local authority approved foster carers, there is an urgent need to recruit more people able to provide safe, loving, and local homes for vulnerable children.Local Authority Fostering South East is a new virtual fostering hub bringing together the expertise of 20 councils from across the region. The new hub will ensure prospective foster carers have access to all support in one place, right from the start of a carer’s fostering journey.The new regional hub is also launching a marketing campaign to raise awareness of this unique role and encourage more people to take the next step and become a foster carer with their local council. In doing so they will benefit from comprehensive local training, generous financial assistance, and ongoing support from a non-profit organisation.Additionally, prospective foster carers will benefit from a new fostering ambassador scheme, which enables those considering fostering to speak to an existing carer to find out what this life-changing role is really like.Cllr Jacquie Russell, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, said: “As members of the new regional hub we are delighted to be part of a collaborative effort to support children and young people. Although we have achieved our strongest fostering recruitment and retention in 10 years recently, the number of children and young people we care for continues to grow and we still desperately need more people in West Sussex to become foster carers or supported lodging hosts.“The regional hub will make the best use of resources by working together with other local authorities and will help us ensure that our children and young people can fulfil their potential in West Sussex.”Natasha Sampson, South East Regional Strategic Lead, said: “This is a really exciting time for fostering. For the first time in the South East, we are leveraging the collective skills, knowledge, resources and support of 20 local authorities to ensure children and young people have a stable home, in a loving family, which they all deserve.“The new hub will make this possible by increasing the number of local foster carers and making sure they are well supported through their recruitment journey and beyond.“I would urge anyone interested in fostering to get in touch with us and find out more about becoming a foster carer with your local authority. ”More information about becoming a foster carer can be found on [Local Authority Fostering South East’s new website](https://www.lafosteringse.org.uk/) and its social media channels.Those interested in fostering can also contact the regional hub directly to speak to a member of the recruitment team by calling 0300 131 2797.The local authorities involved in this project are:Achieving for Children (London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames, The Royal Borough of Kingston Upton Thames and The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead)Bracknell Forest CouncilBrighton and Hove City CouncilEast Sussex County CouncilHampshire County CouncilIsle of Wight CouncilKent County CouncilMedway CouncilMilton Keynes City CouncilOxfordshire County CouncilPortsmouth City CouncilBrighter Futures for Children (Reading)Slough Borough CouncilSouthampton City CouncilSurrey County CouncilWest Berkshire CouncilWest Sussex County CouncilWokingham Borough Council​ **For further information please contact the news desk on 0330 222 8090 or email** **pressoffice@westsussex.gov.uk****. For urgent out-of-hours enquiries please call 07767 098415.** Facebook  Twitter |

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