

MuslimFostering.org launched to recruit carers and ensure children receive appropriate religious support

Friday 20 May, 2016

A dedicated fostering advice and support service has been launched with the aim of recruiting more foster carers and ensuring they can fully and sensitively meet the religious needs of children in their care.

MuslimFostering.org, operated by humanitarian charity Penny Appeal, is encouraging more Muslims to become foster carers, and offering guidance and training to carers and agencies, to help ensure the Muslim children they care for can feel comfortable and confident in their faith.

The service is led by Social Worker Tay Jiva, who says Muslim potential foster carers do not always feel they are fully supported or understood, and that Muslim foster children are not always cared for by fosterers who understand their religious needs.

Furthermore, with thousands of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children expected to be resettled in the UK over the next few years, and interest in caring for refugees increasing, the need for more Muslim foster carers and strong Islamic and cultural awareness among all foster carers is increasing.

"Children in care have often suffered abuse or trauma and they deserve a safe home where they can be themselves and get the support they need to heal and grow," Tay explained. "However, too often foster carers don't have the knowledge or confidence to assist children with their religious needs.

"By helping more Muslims become foster carers and giving non-Muslim foster carers a better understanding of Islam, more Muslim foster children can feel at home."

Freedom of Information requests* have revealed that:

- **Of approximately 2,000 Muslim children who come into foster care every year, half are placed in non-Muslim homes.**
- **In several local authorities, 75% of Muslim foster children spend time living in non-Muslim homes.**
- **20% of local authorities do not record the religion of foster carers or foster children because it is not compulsory for them to do so.**

Aamer Naeem, Penny Appeal CEO, added: "MuslimFostering.org works nationwide, signposting potential carers to appropriate authorities or agencies in their area and offering guidance on the process of becoming a foster carer. We also offer approved carers dedicated Islam awareness and training sessions, as we know that living with carers who have a good understanding of their religion makes a massive difference to the child."

Anyone interested in becoming a foster carer can visit: www.pennyappeal.org/appeal/muslim-fostering or call 03000 11 11 11 for information and advice. Donations to support the guidance and training services can also be made online or by telephone.

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