

THE IRISH FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION

Irish
Foster Care
Association



MEMBERSHIP & SERVICES INFORMATION

WE ARE HERE

The Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA) is the national organisation that supports foster families and the wider fostering community. We advance and promote best practice in foster care through support, learning and advocacy. We believe in a society where the importance of fostering is recognised, valued and supported.

Membership with IFCA is broad based and includes foster and relative carers, social workers, child care workers, academics and others with an interest in or who are involved in foster care. When you join IFCA, you become part of a community. Our members inform our work, and are part of a collective voice for the fostering community.

THINKING ABOUT FOSTERING? ALREADY INVOLVED?

JOIN IFCA AND BE PART OF A STRONGER VOICE IN FOSTER CARE

Whether you are being assessed to become a foster carer, already fostering, working in the fostering sector, or simply passionate about supporting foster care - there's a place for you in IFCA.

We offer a range of membership options tailored to suit different needs and households. Becoming a member connects you to a vibrant community, gives you access to vital support, and ensures your voice is heard in shaping the future of foster care.

Join today - your first year membership is free.

Member benefits include:

- Access to the National Helpline Service Mon-Fri 11am to 3pm
- Access to the National Advocacy Service & National Counselling service
- Access to purchase IFCA Legal Protection Insurance Cover
- Access to extensive Learning & Development opportunities
- Access to IFCA Hubs and Branches that operate throughout Ireland
- Twice yearly Journals on topics relevant to fostering
- Updates on matters relevant to fostering and access to IFCA surveys
- Voting privileges in our AGM



WWW.IFCA.IE

JOIN US AT BRANCH & HUB EVENTS

IFCA Branch and Hub events offer a welcoming space to connect with fellow foster carers and others in the foster care community who are passionate about fostering. These gatherings are a valuable opportunity to:

- Meet and network with local foster carers and individuals interested in foster care.
- Discuss key issues affecting foster care and get guidance on where to find further help and resources.
- Enjoy informal support through get togethers and shared conversations.
- Make your voice count by sharing your experiences and influencing foster care policy at both local and national levels through IFCA.
- Stay informed about the latest developments in fostering and IFCA's advocacy and campaign work.
- Access valuable resources, including updates on IFCA's services, as well as upcoming seminars, training sessions, learning opportunities, and social events.

JOIN NOW



We are happy to answer any queries you might have about membership. Please contact us on 01 4599474 or membership@ifca.ie



NATIONAL HELPLINE SERVICE Here to Support You

Our confidential National Helpline Service is available to anyone, members and non-members, seeking guidance, information, or support related to fostering.

Our trained staff and volunteers provide a compassionate, non-judgmental listening ear and practical support, including:

- A safe, confidential space (except where there's risk to self or others)
- Empathetic listening and emotional support
- Expert guidance and signposting to relevant services
- Help with communication and problem-solving
- Accurate, up-to-date information on fostering
- Highlighting and escalating systemic issues for organisational advocacy
- Referrals to advocacy and counselling services for members, when needed

CONTACT US



National Helpline Service
Monday - Friday
11am - 3pm
T: 01 458 5123
E: support@ifca.ie

NATIONAL ADVOCACY SERVICE

At the Irish Foster Care Association, we understand that navigating challenges in foster care can feel overwhelming, that's why our dedicated Advocacy Team is here to listen, guide and empower members.

We are committed to ensuring that you feel acknowledged, understood, and supported. Whether you're dealing with a complex situation or simply need help preparing for a conversation or meeting, we're here to help. Our advocacy is built on collaboration, communication & encouragement.

Above all, we believe in empowering you to confidently advocate for your own needs, views, and concerns. We can support you to:

- Understand what is happening
- Explore your views and feelings without judgment
- Prepare to have your voice heard
- Safeguard your rights
- Ensure your views and wishes are considered

Our team is here to walk with you – with empathy, understanding, and practical support. Whether you're a foster carer, young person, or someone connected to foster care, our advocacy service is a free, confidential service for members.

NATIONAL COUNSELLING SERVICE

IFCA recognises the need to support foster carers who have had the experience of an allegation of abuse or complaints made against them, who have been involved in complex fostering experiences or who have found that the experience of fostering has placed stress on them in their lives. Referrals to our National Counselling Service can be made from the National Helpline & Advocacy Service to our qualified and experienced counsellor, with the consent of foster carers. The service is a confidential, free service for members.

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

At the Irish Foster Care Association, we understand that fostering is a journey of continuous learning and change. That's why we place learning, growth, and support at the centre of everything we do.



IFCA's Learning & Development offers a mix of in-person and online events. These sessions are designed to inspire, inform & empower, covering everything from trauma-informed care & legal guidance to practical supports & day-to-day fostering advice.

Our **National Conference** brings together foster carers, professionals and experts for an energising programme of workshops, keynote talks and networking. It's a chance to connect, share stories and gain fresh insights to bring back into your fostering journey.

Members receive **Foster Journal** which is packed with thought-provoking articles, research updates & stories from foster carers and young people that reflect the real experiences of fostering in Ireland today. Our **Stories from Foster Care Podcast** series, share real stories and meaningful conversations that shine a light on the everyday realities of fostering.



Whether you join us online, in your local area, or at our national events, IFCA Learning & Development ensures you're part of a community that's learning, growing and thriving together.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Ensuring that the voice of foster care is heard at national level is a core part of our mission. We actively engage with Government departments, statutory bodies, and key stakeholders to represent the experiences and needs of foster families across Ireland.



This national advocacy ensures that foster carers are represented where it matters most - at the tables where policy, practice, and the future of foster care is shaped.

Our advocacy work includes contributing to consultations, shaping policy development, preparing annual pre-budget submissions & meeting regularly with departmental officials & partner organisations. Through this ongoing engagement, we work to influence positive change, highlight emerging issues & ensure that the perspectives of foster carers are considered in the decisions that affect them.

Become a member today

JOIN NOW



The Irish Foster Care Association

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TU Dublin, Tallaght Campus
Dublin, D24 A386

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Email **admin@ifca.ie**

Helpline **01 458 5123**

Email **support@ifca.ie**