

Kia ora

I'm delighted that you are interested in becoming a foster parent with Wesley Community Action's Te Waka Kotahi team. Whether you are interested in full-time care, part-time (respite) care, or a role in our group home, you will have the opportunity to make a real difference in a young person's life.

This document contains information about our foster care programme and a position summary to help you consider if this is a role where you could make a contribution.

You are welcome to contact Sarah Packman, Team Manager Te Waka Kotahi, our foster care programme, on 027 475 4148 if you would like to discuss this further.

If you wish to apply for a position as a foster parent, please send us:

- A current and up-to-date CV
- A detailed cover letter outlining your experience, your reasons for applying and whether you are interested in full-time or part-time (respite) fostering
- The names and contact details of at least three referees (two work-related, including your most recent employer, and one personal)
- The names and contact details of employers if you have had a previous caregiving role
- The completed pre-employment checklist (page 16)

You can email your application to Isabel Macdonald [imacdonald@wesleyca.org.nz](mailto:imacdonald@wesleyca.org.nz)

Please note: Incomplete applications may not be accepted.

If you decide you are not yet ready to apply to become a foster parent, we would still like to stay in contact with you. You may be available in a few months' time or there could be another role where you could contribute. We are also looking for part-time foster parents and youth mentors. Please let us know if you are interested in finding out more about either of these roles.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards



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## About Te Waka Kotahai

Our Te Waka Kotahi foster care programme provides therapeutic foster care and intensive social work to nurture and care for up to 11 young people aged 12 to 17 who are unable to live with their families. They are in our care for up to 12 months. We support their positive development, while providing them with a stable and caring living environment, either in a one-to-one family setting with a foster parent in the foster parent's own home, or at our group home in Tawa.

Each young person is fully involved in all decisions regarding their care and future, and they set their own goals for their development (e.g. education, health, positive social networks, cultural identity, family/whānau contact). Our team works together to support them to achieve these goals.

Throughout the year, we help them to reconnect with their family, move on to a long-term foster placement, or to live independently. Our Family Action Worker continues to support the young person and their whānau for six weeks after they leave the programme, and they know they can always turn to us if they need our support.

<b>Our team includes:</b>	<b>Their role is:</b>
Up to 8 full-time foster parents	Provide nurture and a safe and stable home environment with clear and consistent boundaries that are in line with the young person's plan
Up to six part-time (respite) foster parents	Provide nurture and a safe and stable environment with clear and consistent boundaries that are in line with the young person's full-time placement and plan. Part-time (respite) foster parents provide weekend care on a regular basis.
Three social workers	Support the young person to develop their own plan so they know what is going to happen for them in their placement, work with the young person's wider network and ensure that everyone works together to ensure a stable placement. Also strengthen links between the young person and their whānau, and support the young person to develop their transition (exit)
Part-time support worker	Supports the foster parent and their unique needs which includes regular meetings and phone calls and actively seeking your feedback on how things are going for you.
Youth mentors	Actively encourage the young person's interests and skills and help them to build wider social networks as per their plan.
Clinical psychologist	Provides training and supervision for the team, helping them to effectively meet the needs of each young person by understanding reasons for behaviours and understanding our responses to those behaviours
Tikanga advisers	Provide guidance in matters of tikanga (Māori cultural practices and values) and build links with iwi, hapū, and whānau
Team Manager	Provides professional day to day oversight and support
Clinical supervisor	Provides support to the team to help them strengthen their skills and ability to respond professionally to the work
Senior Managers	Provide operational and practice support to the team.

## Position Summary

### Therapeutic Foster Parent – full-time or part-time

**Responsible to:** Team Manager, Te Waka Kotahi

As a foster parent with Wesley Community Action you will be a key member of the team around your young person, along with:

- the young person/s
- other Wesley Community Action (WCA) staff
- Te Waka team social workers, youth workers and mentors
- the young person's whānau/family,
- Oranga Tamariki
- The range of people who support the young person's development (e.g. coach, mentor, teacher, therapists etc)

### Purpose of the role

Being a therapeutic foster parents is something more than just having a spare room, wanting to work from home and loving kids.

You will be making the most profound difference to a young person's life by providing the positive aspects of a nurturing and emotionally healthy family environment, combined with active and structured support as per the agreed plans created by social workers and others in the team, to promote the healthy development of the young person who will be living with you for one year. You will be part of that team of professionals dedicated to helping the young person achieve their goals and will be required to follow through on agreed strategies. Proactive and positive relationships with this team will be important to help bring out the best in the young person and overcome any hurdles they have from their past.

### The history of Wesley's involvement in foster care – almost 25 years of experience!

We first started working in partnership with what is now the Ministry of Social Development in 1996 to provide foster care as part of the government's Youth Services Strategy (YSS). We now work with Oranga Tamariki to care for a specific group of young people who require intensive therapeutic foster care. The YSS was developed in response to an identified gap in care services, where this core group of young people were not having their needs met in traditional one-on-one, group home or residential institutional foster care.

We are a unique service and we are strictly monitored by Oranga Tamariki and audited annually against our contract standards to ensure we continue to achieve the best outcomes for the young people referred to our care.

### What is therapeutic foster care?

Therapeutic or treatment foster care is a distinct, powerful, and unique approach to care that provides young people with a combination of the best elements of traditional foster care and residential treatment care. In therapeutic foster care, the positive aspects of the nurturing and therapeutic family environment are combined with active and structured treatment, or responses. A therapeutic foster program provides, individualised and intensive treatment for young people who would otherwise be placed in an institutional or residential setting. Instead young people are placed in specific foster homes, with specially trained foster parents who understand the therapeutic role they play in that young person's life.

Every single interaction had with a young person must have as its core objective, the potential to 'develop' that young person therefore we focus on how we 'response' rather than how we 'react' to moments of crisis. So whether it be sitting on the couch watching TV with them or reassuring them of your commitment to them, when they are trying their best to have you reject them, the requirement is to have a therapeutic response in mind

We talk of 'facing the fire'. At the times most people might turn and walk away, or reject, we will turn and 'face the fire'. That is when our work is at its most profound.

### **What is the difference between therapeutic foster care and traditional foster care?**

Therapeutic foster care and traditional foster care are two distinct approaches to caring for young people, and respond to differing needs.

- **Traditional foster care** provides nurturing, safe, and contained care for young people who require placement outside of their family. The primary reason for placement in traditional foster care is the need for care and protection. The role of the foster parent is that of caregiver and nurturer. Therapy, if any, occurs outside of the foster home.
- **Therapeutic foster care** is guided by very intentional and effective approaches. These are proven to work by a whole lot of evidence gathered from around the world of foster care. Therapeutic foster care responds in a proactive and developing way to challenging behaviours, and working on current issues for young people. It combines clinical treatment approaches that are typically associated with settings like an institution, with a nurturing and individualised family and community-based environment. Therefore, therapy is active, "in the moment", and occurs in the foster home, led by the agreed therapeutic programme developed by our social workers, psychologist and wider networks.

### **I don't know what this will actually mean for me as a foster parent and how I should act?**

Don't worry! We will work as a team with you on this and ensure you are fully prepared for the role you will play in a young person's life, but key to this is your openness and willingness to learn new ways of doing things with young people. You will participate in training, case consultations and professional supervisions,

### **What will I be required to do?**

As a foster parent you will be required to:

- Have a car, a full driver's license and be a confident driver.
- Have a clean and tidy home to offer a young person with their own bedroom.
- Have a good level of personal health. This work requires you to be mobile and active.
- Be brave and acknowledge the personal impact of this work with your wider team as early as possible with a view to us being able to support you properly so that it doesn't stop you from being the 'best' you.
- Role-model by encouraging and reinforcing appropriate behaviours.
- Attend to the young person's socialisation needs by involving them in family, school, and community activities.
- Respond quickly and appropriately in challenging situations using the agreed practices.
- Attend and participate as a team member in the development and review of the young person's Individual Development Plan and advocate on behalf of your young person to achieve goals identified in that plan.

- Work as an active member of the ‘treatment’ team around that young person and follow through on treatment recommendations
- Provide a smoke-free living environment.
- Attend all required training and agency meetings, external meetings as necessary.
- Maintain the strict confidentiality of all information pertaining to the foster young person and the birth family.
- Successfully pass Police and Oranga Tamariki checks and achieve successful reference checks.
- Have the ability to understand and show acceptance towards the young person’s birth families and commit to promote the reunification of families and permanency for young people wherever possible.
- Be accessible at all times as the first point of contact to respond to any issue or incident that may arise regarding the young person, as you would your own child.
- Support the young person’s emotional, spiritual and cultural needs and respond to these in a safe and nurturing way
- Develop and maintain a positive relationship with the young person’s whānau/family
- Supply sufficient and nutritional food for the young person and help them to maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Make sure the young person is actively occupied and supervised at all times, as per the agreed Individual Development Plan.
- Adhere to our agency policies as a staff member.
- Work with the WCA Social Worker and other professionals to make sure that the young person attends the range of services identified in their Individual Development Plan and is working towards their goals
- Transport the young person to attend school, therapy sessions, day programme sessions etc. as required
- Spend “scheduled” recreational time with the young person each week and motivating and encouraging them to pursue their interests
- Maintain open communication with the Team Manager, social workers, family members, youth mentors, teachers, and other significant professionals regarding the young person’s progress. You will work as a team to help overcome any difficulties.
- Bring any key incidents, issues or problems regarding the care of the young person to the timely attention to the WCA social worker
- Keep track of the young person’s progress and keeping accurate records (including purchasing/petty cash records) as required by WCA.
- Support the young person in their transition back to their area of origin or new community, and where appropriate accompanying them to visits to help them settle in.
- Suspend any judgement about our young person’s family or whanau and accept that for them, their family is important.

### **What makes a great foster parent?**

We know what makes a great foster parent. How many of the following attributes can you honestly tick off for yourself?

It is important that our foster parents:

- Are focussed only on fostering and not on any other work.
- Have their own computer and cell phone so they can receive and send emails/calls/texts.

- Be committed and genuinely enjoy being with young people and spending time with them
- Can reflect on their own behaviour and know how their own past experiences have impacted on who they are
- Can acknowledge the times when they didn't get it right and learn from that experience.
- Acknowledge that Wesley has 20 years of experience. We actually do know some stuff about this work.
- Have strong community, family and whānau networks and support that you can get topped up by.
- Are compassionate, and have empathy for young people and their families/whānau
- Are open and honest communicators
- Are good at spotting the strengths in young people EVEN when it is very hard to do at times.
- Are encouraging of the young person's interests and abilities
- Can challenge young people's behaviours and attitudes, while continuing to support and care for them
- Are open to learning and working with cultures other than their own
- Are patient, consistent, "firm but fair", and have realistic expectations of the young person
- Are flexible and put the young person's needs first
- Work well with others in a team setting
- Enjoy reflecting on and improving their foster parenting
- Keep calm under pressure and know when they are hitting 'the wall' and will tell us this.
- Have the attitude that "tomorrow is a new day"
- Have a great sense of humour
- Understand that this is not just about 'parenting' someone else's child, it is about committing to the vocation that is 'changing a life'.
- Are free of the responsibilities of caring for dependent children
- Can commit to providing care for a young person for 12 months
- Have a literacy and communication level that will allow them to read, write, and communicate effectively with the young person, other staff and other members of the community and team.
- Possess sound judgement and good decision-making skills
- Are compassionate, patient and professional in all situations.
- Are flexible, open-minded and possess a willingness to learn.
- Are creative and in good physical and mental health
- Are willing to give and 'receive' constructive feedback that is of a developing nature
- Are open and willing to learn new strategies and techniques to help challenging young people.
- Are able to maintain appropriate objectivity when dealing with sensitive issues concerning the young person.
- Be willing to relate with birth families
- Be committed and enjoy
- Have own legal transport and be fully licenced
- Are able to take direction from leadership and articulate disagreement before it becomes an issue.

## Answers to frequently asked questions

### Why become a foster parent with Wesley Community Action?

When you join Wesley, you join an amazing team of foster parents, social workers, youth mentors, and others who share a genuine love and respect for the young people we work with.

Our work is truly strengths-based. We believe in working with young people, their families (whānau), and each other in a way that brings out the best in all of us. We focus on the strengths and abilities of each young person, and we acknowledge that the young people themselves know most about their lives and what works for them. Our role is to provide a safe environment for them with clear boundaries and feedback about what the impact of their behaviour is.

We support our foster parents with:

- 24-hour support to respond to critical incidents and crisis
- Monday to Friday office hours' admin and routine support
- regular supervision, team meetings, training
- a strong supportive team environment
- a salary and reimbursements

Collectively we know we make a difference in young people's lives.

### What's the difference between full-time and part-time (respite) care?

Full-time foster parents have a young person in their home full-time. However, the young person ideally spends regular weekends with a part-time (respite) foster parent. This gives the full-time foster parent a break from what is often an intense and demanding role.

While part-time foster parents spend less time with a young person, they have the same responsibilities as full-time foster parents and are likely to experience similar challenges – and rewards.

### When things are really tough who do I call?

Being part of our team is an opportunity for you to work at the cutting edge of care. We support you to do this by offering 24-hour on call to manage any extreme out-of-the-ordinary incident or crisis situation that poses a threat to you, the young person or others.

All of this occurs within a strong supportive team environment where you are paid for your work.

### What does it take?

The foster parents on our team come from all walks of life. What they have in common is a genuine desire and an unwavering commitment to provide the young people on our programme with the support they need and not give up when times get tough. All are team players, have the ability to connect with young people, and it helps that they have a great sense of humour too.

We've included a list about what it takes to make a great foster parent in this information pack. While there are certain qualities we are looking for, don't worry that you don't tick all the boxes, none of us do but there are key qualities that make great foster parents. Our approach at Wesley is to work with everyone's unique strengths and experience, and build on that through on-going training and development.

It is really important that you have a car and full driver licence, and are free from the responsibilities of caring for dependent children and if you are a full time foster parent, free from working somewhere else. Fostering will be your full-time job.

### **What adjustments in my personal life might I need to consider?**

Some areas you will need to think about and discuss with your social work colleague are:

- Social interactions and drinking alcohol, role modelling appropriate adult behaviours
- Not leaving a young person unsupervised in the home
- Having a smoke-free home and car
- Securing valuables and keys and cash
- Appropriate social media access and TV viewing
- Appropriate music and reading material
- Having partners stay and their relationship with the young person.

Each young person has unique strengths and areas of development; these will be discussed with you at the time. However, it will be vital you are also proactive about matters and raising them with your social work colleague 'before' they occur so that good planning occurs and you and your young person's needs are being best addressed.

### **What we have learned that won't work? The deeply honest truth is that it won't work if:**

- You are not prepared to follow through on agreed responses with young people even if you find it difficult to do so. This is a therapeutic programme and so we must have consistency of approach from all involved. If you disagree with a process then speak up, if you find it difficult to follow through, let us know and we will support you.
- You change the plan for a young person without discussion with them or us. This is disruptive and can unsettle young people, which may contribute to poor behaviours from them which will add stress to you and your colleagues' workloads.
- You are unhappy about another staff for any reason and speak of this to young people or other staff. We expect honesty and courage from our team. If you are not happy, take it directly to the source or if you need support on how to approach the staff, take it to your manager. If you raise an issue about a staff with your manager, the first question you will be asked is 'have you raised your concerns with them personally and if not, why not'? This is in line with our Te Ara Wēteriana / The Wesley Way practice framework. You can find a copy of Te Ara Wēteriana / The Wesley Way on page 15 of this document.
- You talk about other young people in our programme with your young person. We adhere to strict confidentiality and one young person's business is no one else's business. This means also that we expect confidentiality about young people with anyone outside of the service who is not a part of the professional support network.
- You resort to behaviour that is similar to that of the young person in response to their behaviour. We expect adult responses at all times, this means appropriate verbal and body language, even in the most trying of times. We must role model to them what we expect from them not what we might get from them.
- You play favourites ... each young person must be welcomed into our programme and given the 'same' respect as any other young person would. Our young people notice when they are treated differently to another. This causes problems for all concerned if it occurs.
- You do not let us know that you are struggling in a timely manner. This contributes to staff stress and distress and is disempowering for our social workers and manager who want to do their very best to support you. They cannot put supports in place for matters they are not aware of.

- The home environment you are providing is not clean, tidy and hygienic. This means the young person has their own room with a door to close, and the common living areas are well maintained, presentable and clean. We will not place a young person in a home that is overcrowded, cluttered or unhygienic. This has nothing to do with 'modern' or 'old', 'rich' or 'poor'. It is about a young person feeling that the way their environment is cared for reflects the level of care they will receive while they are living in it, so please be aware that while we respect your right to live in an environment of your choosing if it does not meet the standard outlined we will not place a young person in that environment.
- You are not a confident driver. We need our foster parents to be confident in driving distance. Sometimes your young person will have appointments in other areas of Wellington. You must be willing and fully able to drive confidently to those meetings.
- You tell us you are 'busy' doing personal things during the agreed times you are providing care. This means that even if your young person is at school, you are expected to be available should they need to come home for any reason. We try to ensure that you are free during those times but sometimes it doesn't work like that.
- You expect our social workers to be caregivers. Our social workers are focussed on navigating the vast numbers of people and services involved with our young people, to ensure the plan around our young people is robust, appropriate and highly effective. This takes focus and means they cannot be expected to supervise young people because you don't want to. They have their jobs, you have yours.

### **What are the young people on the programme like?**

The young people on our programme are aged between 12 and 17 and are referred by Oranga Tamariki and require foster care with us for up to twelve months.

They are ordinary young people who, sadly, have had extraordinary histories and experiences, which means they often come from homes with issues of family violence, drugs and alcohol, abuse and neglect, poor mental health and financial hardship. As a result of these challenges our young people will often act out when stressed. It is not uncommon for our young people to have been in many foster-care placements so they have moved around a lot and missed out on going to school regularly. This can mean it's hard for them to fit into the school system and it can also mean that they find it hard to be socially accepted by other kids.

You *will* be challenged. Of that there is no doubt. Our service is a specialist service designed to support young people with challenging behaviours. Wesley wants you to be very clear that you are aware of this as we do not want you to be surprised should you experience challenging behaviours. We also want you to be aware that this work is also incredibly rewarding, fun and dynamic. Our foster parents care deeply for their young people and develop genuine affection and regard for them and get it back.

The young people don't want to be different – they want to be as normal as possible. Our role is to support and guide them to make healthy choices. We want them to have a chance, which is what every young person deserves.

### **What is a typical day/week like for full-time foster parents?**

From 9am to 3pm each weekday, our young people are normally in school, alternative education or training. Besides training sessions, meetings etc., your time as a foster parent during school hours would generally be quite flexible with the condition being, you must be available and contactable during these hours.

This means we need to know if you have a personal appointment elsewhere so that to the best of our ability we can support you to attend that. However your first priority is to be available to that young person. That means phones must be on and we expect you to be responsive to contact from us. This is most particularly in case your young person has an issue with their day programme, for example, their behaviour has deteriorated at their programme, and the school requires a carer to attend immediately, or they are sent home if they are unwell or need to be taken to an appointment etc. You will need to be available should that occur.

Generally, three Mondays out of four during the school term, our foster parents, social workers, and team manager meet together for a couple of hours to reflect on the past week, celebrate successes, learn new skills, and support each other through challenges. You are required to attend these meetings if you are a full-time foster parent, and wherever possible, if you are a part-time foster parent.

You will also be required to attend key meetings as/when they occur such as planning meetings, counselling sessions with the young person, education meetings etc.

Being a foster parent involves working as part of a team to help the young person achieve their goals, and foster parents and their young person meet regularly with the range of individuals who are involved in supporting them. This team ideally includes members of their birth or extended family/whānau. The Wesley foster team brings everyone together and leads this process.

Outside of school hours, besides doing everyday family activities, foster parents and young people spend time together. This is to build the therapeutic relationship and means taking the time to do things the young person enjoys. Where appropriate the young people also spend time with a youth mentor and they also have other activities and appointments that you may need to support them to get to throughout the week.

During school holidays the young people may attend holiday programmes, have activities planned, visit family, or simply be on holiday with their foster parents

### **What training and support do foster parents get?**

When foster parents start out at Wesley they attend our two or three-day in-house induction and training programme in the first few months. Further training is provided throughout the year and can be tailored to the specific needs of each foster parent and the young person they are working with.

While we expect our foster parents to manage the day to day matters that arise with their young person, special back up support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for those unique crisis or critical events that may occur. This is highly valued by our foster parent team. The team working with each young person works as a collective to address any issues that come up.

Each week foster parents meet to give each other support. They also get extra guidance and support from an external supervisor, and a child psychologist who is an expert in matters relating to children and young people in care.

### **What about time off?**

There are several instances where you may have time off:

#### **Routine respite**

When you have a young person in care full time, for continuous three week periods, we will aim for you to have paid leave every third weekend. This is called 'routine respite'. During that time the young person will stay with one of our part-time foster parents. If you are a foster parent at our

adolescent unit, we will bring respite cover in to Te Whare, and you will have the opportunity to go away for that weekend.

### **Non-routine respite**

This would occur if there is a period of 24 hours or more where the young person is not in your care e.g. they are on family access or in alternative care outside of Wesley, on school camp etc. This may not be consistent with the three 3 weekly routine identified above, but will be considered as part of the overall respite schedule. Please be aware that if you have extended periods of 'down' time from providing care because your young person is in alternative care, if you are not on leave, you may be called upon to support another young person short term.

### **Between placements**

If you have a gap between placement of a young person and it is agreed another placement will be occurring with you within an agreed amount of time, you will continue to be paid. In this instance you can expect us to engage with you to fulfil other Te Waka duties e.g. provide respite for another Wesley young person, undertake administrative tasks, or assist with day programmes for other young people (supervision of) while we are processing your next placement.

### **Annual leave**

As well as respite, our foster parents are also entitled to four weeks' annual leave each year. It is a requirement that you provide at least a months notice for this as it is very difficult to get cover at short notice and we cannot disrupt the care of our young people in an unplanned and insensitive way. Our policy is that at least two weeks of your leave must be taken consecutively in the 12-month period you accrue leave. Requests for leave must go to the Team Manager in writing.

### **How would I be matched with a young person?**

For one-to-one foster care the matching process would take into account your personality, interests and strengths and you will participate in the decision making process.

As a government-contracted service Wesley does not get to choose who will be referred to us, so every effort is made to match you with a young person who is likely to be most compatible with you, your skills and your environment. We want the placement to work. But it is important that you understand the level of care we are contracted to provide.

In our group home, our foster parents will also participate in the decision-making process which includes analysis of the group dynamic in the home, and how the new young person would fit in with any other young person in care there.

Whether you are a one to one foster parent, or a group home foster parent, you would be consulted as part of the process. For the team manager to make a final decision for a young person to come into care there will be an opportunity for you to meet the young person to assess whether there is a good 'fit'. Part of the decision making process includes you being fully informed about the young person's background.

Despite our best efforts we understand there is highly likely still to be some anxiety about the final 'move' for a young person and a foster parent into a full time placement with each other so we work very hard to respond to all questions and concerns before we go ahead.

We try very hard to manage the 'moving' in process over several weeks though this cannot always be the case, but we want you and the young person to meet up a few times to get to know each other further. This would include at least one overnight stay in the placement. If everything goes to

plan, and a decision to make the placement permanent results, there would be a celebration to welcome the young person into your family home.

### **What is our Wesley bottom line? When will we 'end' a placement?**

Wesley will not exit a young person as a punitive response to behaviour.

We will not 'end' a placement with you simply because you decide you want to give the young person 'back' (yes this has been asked of us believe it or not). If you refuse to have a young person back, this will be deemed as you 'not providing' care and will be perceived as your resignation.

We are a specialist service, we take the time to manage entry into our service which requires significant investment into the young person and 'by' the young person. We are contracted to support young people with behavioural challenges so when behaviour gets challenging, we 'face the fire' and stay invested.

We are passionate in our objective to not be "another" failed placement in our young person's life. This means we will only exit a young person if it is:

- a) a planned exit that has been well thought out and is in the best interest of the young person, or
- b) there are extreme circumstances that we had not anticipated and we have to respond, sometimes quickly, to safety concerns for the young person, or someone else.

We expect our social workers and foster parents to commit fully to their young person for the long haul. This means when you might ordinarily in your own life, say 'enough is enough', we expect you to stay in there. All our support systems are in place to keep us as strong as possible at the times when we are most challenged and it is at this time that we must be very careful to ensure that our responses are truly therapeutic and not a knee jerk emotional reaction to a surprising and/or stressful situation.

We do not have the resources available and neither does Oranga Tamariki simply come and pick a young person up and remove them at a moments notice because a foster parent says they have had enough. There are very limited and sometimes no, options for a young person should they be exited urgently.

***Important: Please understand, if we receive this type of request from a foster parent expecting immediate removal of a young person we will be strongly challenging of it and it could be viewed as you 'withdrawing' services, and will be treated therefore as a 'resignation'.***

The decision to end a placement is to be part of a considered and 'managed' process with Wesley taking 'all' factors into consideration, including the wellbeing of the foster parent, and Wesley making the final decision. We accept that on rare occasions this has had to happen quite quickly but we are committed to this occurring in an ethical and best practice manner.

**We need to you to tell us 'everything' about how you are feeling, when you are feeling it, as and when you are feeling it. This is so we can avoid finding ourselves in the unacceptable situation of a placement abruptly ending because you feel you have not been supported as well as you could be.**

### **Do placements end unexpectedly?**

We strive to avoid unplanned exits as explained, but if a young person's behaviour was a risk to themselves or anyone else and we were not able to manage this safely in the placement, this would likely trigger an unplanned exit from our care. If their behaviour is such that they draw the attention of the authorities, the decision can be taken out of our hands. If their behaviour is such that there is still a tiny bit of hope, then we will ask three questions before any unplanned exit:

- Have we truly tried 'everything creatively and therapeutically' possible?
- Is this young person continuing to 'gain' by being with us in some way, even a small way?
- If not here with us, then where and will that alternative be as good as or better for them than being with us?

Our responses to those questions will help us to ensure we are doing right thing by our young people.

### **What's the worst I can expect? Some truths ...**

- It is true you may feel tired and stressed at times. You may feel emotionally stretched.
- It is also true you may wonder sometimes what difference you are making in your young person's life because you are not seeing great change in the time you hoped and it may feel that you are dealing with the same issues over and over again.
- It is true you may experience a young person not being honest about themselves, or honest about you.
- It is true you may sometimes feel distant from your young person because they may not be connecting with you in the way you wish.
- It is true you may sometimes think that your colleagues do not understand what it is like for you when you have this young person in your care full time and they don't, especially when we are asking you to stay committed and 'therapeutic' during the most challenging of challenging times.
- It is true that you may experience a young person being verbally abusive, or threatening to damage property. This is a rare occurrence but it has happened. We **never** ask foster parents or social workers to accept that kind of behaviour and we will respond clearly and strongly if it should occur. However, it is important we/you are prepared and therefore not surprised when/if any of these types of scenarios occur.
- It is true that you may experience a young person who is in distress, acting in a risky way. Rarely, a young people has threatened to harm themselves and sometimes they actually have harmed themselves. We have clear protocols in place to respond to any instance like this.
- It is true you may experience a young person who runs away from the care you are providing. This is not about you, it is about them and their challenges. We have clear protocols in place to respond to instances like this.

We expect our social workers and foster parents however to be part of the therapeutic plan that addresses those instances if they should occur. This is why we have a 'team' around each young person. This work cannot be done alone and at times we need every single resource we have, in place.

Our young people are ordinary young people who have had extraordinary life experiences that no child should have had. They often have yet to develop really confident and appropriate ways of expressing themselves when they are happy, angry or sad. It is our mission to coach them to learn these ways but this can take some time and they will need to be guided by us all.

### **What's the best I can expect? Some truths...**

- It is true that you could quite possibly be that one special person to form 'the' relationship with this young person that is going to be one of the primary 'references' for them to reflect on when they are an adult that will guide them safely through life.
- It is true that in your care, you may get to see the true impact of what a therapeutic and caring relationship can do to influence positive change where others felt there was little hope.

- It is true a young person may credit you for the positive change they have made in their life and thank you for it.
- It is true that you may feel that you are part of a truly professional and skilled team who collectively are changing young people's lives for the better.
- It is true you will learn new skills and tools that could change your own life in a positive way.
- It is true you will get to meet a diverse group of people who become part of your team network, and form close personal long term friendships with your equally as amazing team mates.
- It is true you will get to celebrate your young people's successes and applaud them for their accomplishments.
- It is true you will be part of a lead agency that has been providing foster care for over 20 years and is considered one of the strongest providers in the country in this field of work.
- It is true that you will develop deep insight into this specialised field of important work.
- It is true you will be valued by your organisation.

## **Does this sound like you? So what next?**

### **Step One: You need more information**

If you decide you would like further information about this role before applying, please contact Sarah Packman, Team Manager on [spackman@wesleyca.org.nz](mailto:spackman@wesleyca.org.nz) or 027 475 4148.

As well as discussing the full-time and part time foster parent roles, Sarah can give you more information about our youth mentor roles.

### **Step two: You're ready to apply**

If you feel you have enough information and are ready to apply please send us:

- A current and up-to-date CV
- A detailed cover letter outlining your experience, your reasons for applying and whether you are interested in full-time or part-time (respite) fostering
- The names and contact details of at least three referees (two work-related, including your most recent employer, and one personal)
- The names and contact details of employers if you have had a previous caregiving role
- The completed pre-employment checklist (page 16)

Once we receive the above the next stage is an interview. However before that we would arrange for you to meet, or at least talk to, some of our other foster parents so you can be sure you are making an informed decision about whether the role really is one for you.

As part of our recruitment process we would also want to visit your home to view the living arrangements you have available for a young person.

We would also need to phone your referees and complete Police and Child Youth and Family clearance checks.

As a key part of your and our final decision to commit to a fostering role, you will be required to participate in – at our expense – at least two sessions with our Wesley therapist to ensure you have thoroughly understood the work and what is being asked of you to fulfil the role in as healthy way as possible.

If your application is successful we'll take steps straight away to welcome you into our team.

### How we work: Te Ara Wēteriana / The Wesley Way

Te Ara Wēteriana / The Wesley Way is the heart of our work. It's based on the belief that people are the experts in their own lives. We support them to identify their strengths and skills and the changes they believe will allow them to have a better life.



## TE ARA WĒTERIANA The Wesley Way

Te Ara Wēteriana brings out the best in people. The following principles guide all our engagements:



We give effect to these by:

- Viewing people as experts of their lives
- Using the Treaty of Waitangi as the base for our work
- Calling out and challenging injustice
- Seeking and using feedback to guide our relationships
- Focusing more on what's working
- Being as courageous as those we work alongside
- Acknowledging our power and sharing this
- Striving to be our best by being open to learning and new ideas

**KĀORE MĀ TE WAHA ENGARI MĀ TE RINGA** Don't tell me, show me



### Pre-employment disclosure statement

As part of our final pre-employment we require you to answer the following questions.

Your full name:

Date:

Previous convictions		YES	NO
1. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal or driving offence? Details if yes.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are there any criminal charges currently pending against you? Details if yes.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.a Are there any notifications regarding performance or practice on file about you with any previous employer? Details if yes.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Have you had any circumstance where you have had engagement with the police for any matter? Details if yes.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical clearance			
4. Do you have any current medical/health or psychological conditions that we should be aware of that may interfere with your ability to carry out your duties as a member of Wesley Community Action? Details if yes.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you have any pre-existing medical/health or psychological conditions? Details if yes.....		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. If the above condition/s impact on your ability to fulfil your role in any way (Q4&5) please provide us with an appropriate <b>medical clearance</b> from your health practitioner authorising you as fit for the purpose of the role.		YES	N/A
Declaration			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am legally entitled to work/volunteer in Aotearoa New Zealand. YES/NO</li> <li>I give permission for my referees to be contacted. YES/NO</li> <li>I give permission for my medical records to be accessed if requested YES/NO</li> <li>I have a full and clear driver licence I can produce for sighting. YES/NO</li> <li>The information given in this application is factual and truthful. YES/NO</li> </ul>			
Signed/Dated			

**Please note:** We rely on the accuracy of the information given to us. If it is later discovered that you have not fully disclosed all matters to us or that you have failed to disclose significant information, then the employer is entitled to treat such non-disclosure or misrepresentation as misconduct or serious misconduct and disciplinary proceedings may follow.