



# SUPPORTING FOSTER CARERS AND LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN



**CHARLES HUNTER ASSOCIATES**

Case Study by Sarah Tomlin

## ABOUT CHARLES HUNTER ASSOCIATES:

At Charles Hunter Associates, we understand the critical importance of assembling a social care workforce with the requisite skills, attitudes and qualifications, to provide high-quality care and support to individuals and families in underserved or marginalised communities.

As specialists in social work recruitment, we help organisations across the UK build their social work teams, ultimately improving their service delivery and client outcomes.

We understand the multifaceted challenges faced by both social work professionals and the communities they serve, so we are dedicated to bridging the gap by matching skilled social workers with the right positions where they can make a meaningful impact.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Recognising an opportunity with the Fostering Foundation after spotting a vacancy for their Bristol office, I proactively reached out to introduce myself to their team managers and CEO. I focused on building a strong relationship across the organisation, taking the time to thoroughly understand their unique workforce needs, operational challenges and long-term goals.

This careful approach led to the successful establishment of terms of business with the Fostering Foundation. Impressed with my commitment and understanding of their requirements, they entrusted me with identifying top talent for two additional roles to support the growth of their Tavistock and Cullompton teams.

## WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU OVERCOME?

The Fostering Foundation was looking for candidates with a background in fostering or experience working with children and families. Their culture is deeply family-oriented, offering flexible working arrangements and a supportive, welcoming team environment.

However, one of the primary challenges for these positions was location. With two roles based in the rural areas of Devon and Cornwall, it was difficult to find candidates with relevant experience who were also within a reasonable distance and willing to consider a job change.

To address this, I used a targeted strategy which included placing ads in key locations and sending regular emails and updates to potential candidates about the positions. This proactive approach resulted in six qualified candidates being presented to the team, all offered interviews or informal discussions with management.

The Bristol office posed a different challenge. Being situated in a busy city centre with numerous competing job opportunities available for fostering social work specialists, it was crucial to differentiate the Fostering Foundation from other options available to candidates. The generous benefits and supportive culture of the Fostering Foundation allowed me to effectively promote the roles, leading to three excellent candidates being available, two of whom were interviewed and offered positions.

The competitive nature of the recruitment market, especially this year, presented its own challenges, including overlapping candidate submissions between agencies and the risk of double applications. Maintaining a close relationship with the CEO proved pivotal in overcoming these hurdles.

Through regular phone calls and updates, I gained a clear understanding of their specific needs and how other applications were progressing. This allowed me to secure exclusivity on certain roles and present them to candidates before they became widely known to other recruiters.

## WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME FOR THE CLIENT?

We successfully placed two experienced candidates within the Fostering Foundation's services. Both candidates were transitioning from locum roles and were eager to secure permanent roles in the Southwest. The client was highly impressed with the quality of the candidates and both were offered the position of Senior Supervising Social Worker.

To ensure the candidates started on the best possible footing, I personally supported the onboarding process, and both candidates began their new roles the month following their offers.

I continue to nurture a strong relationship with the managers and the CEO. Thanks to my regular communication with them, I'm able to act fast on sourcing talent for new vacancies when they arise. This allows the organisation to avoid undue expenses and delays arising from unfilled vacancies.

As part of our approach towards ongoing candidate care, we recently followed up with one of the successfully placed candidates. She offered positive and affirming feedback about the support she received and the fantastic opportunity she secured. The Fostering Foundation's Bristol office manager and CEO were both deeply appreciative of this feedback and pleased to hear their new employee was settling in well – a reinforcement of our professional partnership.

## Testimonial from The Fostering Foundation:

“ Sarah delivers a very personalised service to us. She asks questions, learns and adapts her approach, paying close attention to the details. Sarah is proactive with us as clients and the candidates that are her clients. I know Sarah will always make herself available when we need her, and it has been an absolute joy to work with her on filling our recent vacancies – thank you so much for making a difficult process go so smoothly Sarah! – The Fostering Foundation

For more information on how we delivered this project, or to work with us **GET IN TOUCH WITH OUR TEAM TODAY!**



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## CLIENT

The Fostering Foundation – a small, friendly, independent fostering agency in the Southwest dedicated to supporting foster carers and looked-after children.

## RELATIONSHIP START DATE

Starting from March 2024