



# **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE**

## **FOSTERING SERVICE**

### **PAYMENTS TO FOSTER CARERS FROM AUGUST 2018**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Leicestershire County Council recognises the skills, experience and commitment of foster carers and the role foster carers play in working with families in partnership with the Council.

Mainstream foster carers and connected carers are compensated by the Council for their services in two parts:

- An allowance in line with the government's recommended national minimum allowance rates. This covers the costs of looking after a child or young person and increases with the age of the child; and
- A skills fee award which reflects the skills, training and experience of the foster carers.

All mainstream and connected carers will commence their fostering journey on level one and will progress through to level three in order to ensure that all carers receive the full offer of experience and training that means that all children will receive the very best care.

Some mainstream and connected carers will decide to progress to level four, based on experience, expertise and a training requirement. This will enable the matching of children or young people with more complex need in their care.

This scheme will be implemented from August 2018

The payment scheme is based on the **payment-for-skills** principles recommended by the Fostering Network, and the Standards for Foster Care developed by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) to ensure that all foster carers receive induction, training and support, and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

During consultation with foster carers (2018), foster carers reported that CPD is a particularly important aspect to their journey, noting that the previous skills fee scheme (level 0-3) was too limited and did not allow for foster carer career progression. The document recognises all carers - mainstream (also known as in-house) connected carers (also known as kinship or family and friends carers) and specialist carers.

Annual inflation increases will normally be made in April each year as agreed by Leicestershire County Council.

## 2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

*The Fostering Services Regulations* and the *National Minimum Standards for Fostering* state that a fostering service needs a clear statement of aims and objectives. Leicestershire's Fostering Service works in partnership with children and young people, their families and carers to provide safe, caring homes which value the differences in children and young people and help them to achieve their full potential.

We aim to achieve this by providing:

- Safe, warm and caring family environments
- Comprehensive support for children, young people and carers when they need it
- Encouragement for children and young people to meet their full potential and to mark and celebrate their successes
- Personal and group support for carers and their families
- A flexible service which respects individual needs and values diversity
- Measurable outcomes which strive to achieve, or exceed, National Standards
- A professional service which is accountable, financially viable, and maximises partnership opportunities.
- Out of hours support for carers

The Fostering Statement of Purpose is published annually.

### **3. PRINCIPLES OF THE PAYMENT SCHEME**

Basic weekly allowances are payable to all approved foster carers and include an element to cover specific costs as detailed below. These are currently based on the national recommended minimum fostering allowances.

The Carer's Skills Scheme reflects a tiered approach and incorporates payments to all foster carers who are available to provide foster care and meet the training, experience and skill requirements.

The payment scheme is designed to establish fair, equitable and transparent financial arrangements across the county and to promote an excellent quality of care for the most vulnerable children and young people.

## **4. MAINSTREAM AND CONNECTED CARERS - FOSTERING PAYMENTS**

### **4.1 Fostering Allowances**

These payments, based on the National Recommended Minimum Fostering Allowance.

The weekly allowance covers the following:

- Food including school lunches
- Personal and household expenditure
- Toys and play equipment
- Activities - including clubs, hobbies and family days out
- School activities - including trips, holidays and associated equipment
- Dental and optical needs

- Bedding and replacement bedding
- Pocket money and savings
- Day to day transport by car or public transport
- Clothing and school uniform

This list is not exhaustive and further guidance can be obtained from the Fostering Team.

### The Weekly Fostering Allowance from August 2018

AGE OF CHILD	WEEKLY RATE	DAILY RATE
<b>0-4 years</b>	<b>£130</b>	<b>£18.57</b>
<b>5-10 years</b>	<b>£143</b>	<b>£20.43</b>
<b>11-15 years</b>	<b>£164</b>	<b>£23.43</b>
<b>16+ years</b>	<b>£191</b>	<b>£27.29</b>

The allowance is paid monthly arrears. Most carers have the payment made directly into their bank account. These full weekly rates will be paid pro rata for emergency placements. Any part of a day that a child is in placement is paid at a full day's allowance. Where a child in foster care receives support care from another carer, both carers receive a full day's allowance for part days.

These rates are **free from income tax**, as long as they do not exceed the qualifying amount. Information regarding tax is available from the Fostering Network's Fosterline on 0800 040 7675, or from the local tax office.

## 4.2 Mainstream and Connected Carers Skills Scheme

The Carers Skill Scheme, based on national research and promoted by the Fostering Network reflects a transparent and tiered approach. It continues to recognise carers' skills, experience, learning and development. This approach enables matching of children's needs to carers with the experience and competencies that best meet the needs of the children and young people.

All mainstream and connected carers will commence on Level 1. Carers will progress through the levels when they have met the competencies, training and development requirements for each level. The supervising social worker will work with the foster carer to identify training and promote learning. The team manager for the supervising social workers is responsible for ensuring that foster carer support plans are progressed and the annual review should summarise the foster carer's progress through the year.

The Descriptors outlined in this document describe the training, skills and tasks appropriate for each level and include information about how carers can progress through the scheme.

There will be instances when a single or additional payment is needed to ensure that a child or young person's needs are met. This payment is covered in the Discretionary Payments Policy.

**PLEASE SCROLL DOWN**

**Carers Skills Fee:**

		<b>Age 0 – 4</b>	<b>Age 5 – 10</b>	<b>Age 11 – 15</b>	<b>Age 16 - 17</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Skills fee</b>	£32.50	£35.75	£41.00	£47.75
	<b>Weekly payment</b>	<b>£162.50</b>	<b>£178.75</b>	<b>£205.00</b>	<b>£238.75</b>
	Annual Level 1 Total	£8450.00	£9295.00	£10660.00	£12415.00
<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Skills fee</b>	£65.00	£71.50	£82.00	£95.50
	<b>Weekly payment</b>	<b>£195.00</b>	<b>£214.50</b>	<b>£246.00</b>	<b>£286.50</b>
	Annual Level 2 Total	£10140.00	£11154.00	£12792.00	£14898.00
<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Skills fee</b>	£97.50	£107.25	£123.00	£143.25
	<b>Weekly payment</b>	<b>£227.50</b>	<b>£250.25</b>	<b>£287.00</b>	<b>£334.25</b>
	Annual Level 3 Total	£11830.00	£13013.00	£14924.00	£17381.00
<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Skills fee</b>	£182.00	£200.20	£229.60	£267.40
	<b>Weekly payment</b>	<b>£312.00</b>	<b>£343.20</b>	<b>£393.60</b>	<b>£458.40</b>
	Annual Level 4 Total	£16224.00	£17846.40	£20467.20	£23836.80



**Each foster carer must make sure that they take advice from their local tax office about their tax position. Each foster carer is considered self-employed and responsible for the payment of any tax in relation to payments under this scheme.**

## **5. OTHER ALLOWANCES**

### **5.1 Clothing Allowances**

It is important that children in care are provided with appropriate, well-fitting clothing. The fostering team provide a minimum clothing list setting out what a child or young person should have after six months of being looked after.

It is the responsibility of the supervising social worker and the carer to make sure that a clothing list is completed at the start and end of every placement. If, when a child moves to a new carer, it is found the clothing is not adequate, then the previous carer will be expected to reimburse the costs of the shortfall. Carers should keep receipts for all clothing. In cases where children or young people arrive in an emergency with no clothing, or inadequate clothing, a payment up to £150 for each child can be made direct to the foster carer.

### **5.2 School Uniform**

The department provides additional help with school uniform when:

- A child starts primary school (when a grant of £105 is paid)
- A child changes school (the grant will depend on what clothing the child already has and what they need for the new school)
- A child starts secondary education (a grant of £155 is paid)

The replacement of worn out or out grown school uniform is the responsibility of the carer. Some of the above amounts might be varied if children are in very short term placements or if there are very specific uniform requirements. Carers should keep receipts for all clothing.

### **5.3 Birthday Allowances.**

The Birthday Allowance equal to one week's basic maintenance allowance, is paid automatically just before the child's birthday for gifts and celebrations.

### **5.4 Festival Allowance**

The Christmas Allowance equal to one week basic maintenance allowance is paid automatically at the beginning of December. If you would like it to be paid instead for another major religious festival please let your supervising social worker know.

### **5.5 Holiday Allowance**

Holiday opportunities for children and young people in care should be made available. These must be discussed with the child's social worker and fostering supervising social worker and agreed as part of the Care Plan. For example, where children accompany foster carers on

holiday the carer will receive the holiday allowance. If the foster carer is not providing a holiday the holiday allowance may be used to pay for a holiday experience elsewhere; for example, a school trip abroad or residential holiday.

These payments are age-related and are based on two weeks of the basic maintenance allowance. Payments will not be made automatically, but will have to be claimed by foster carers at the appropriate time.

The holiday allowance is paid once a year for each child and should be seen as a contribution towards the total cost of the holiday of the Carer's choice. Where the cost of a holiday exceeds the allowance carers will need to budget for this expense through their allowances. Where children move placement during the year and the first carer has already received the holiday allowance, any payment to the second carer will be at the discretion of the Fostering Service taking into account the child's needs.

### **5.6 School Trips Abroad**

Educational trips for children are important for their development and consideration should be given to a number of possible funding sources including pupil premiums, a child's Personal Education Allowance (PEA), corporate parenting team and fostering allowances that carers receive, including the holiday allowances.

### **5.7 Clubs, weekly activities, sporting sessions, music lessons etc.**

The department is keen to encourage all children in care to experience a range of leisure, sport and cultural activities as these promote friendships, confidence and the opportunity to succeed. Carers are expected to promote these activities and, other than in very exceptional circumstances, fund them from the fostering allowance.

### **5.8 Travel Costs**

The fostering allowance contains a transport element for all day to day journeys. It is expected that wherever possible and appropriate, carers will be responsible for the transport of children in placement. Travel costs can be claimed at **45p** per mile for additional mileage approved by the fostering social worker. This will mainly be for:

- Contact
- School journeys (where out of the catchment area of the carer). The catchment area is within 3 miles of carers address
- Hospital and medical appointments other than routine health checks and treatment.

### **5.9 Carers using public transport**

All bus tickets for a child should be submitted each month for eligible journeys. If a carer needs to accompany the child on a bus journey, the carer may submit their ticket as well.

A bus pass for the young person should be considered if bus travel would be an appropriate and cost-effective alternative to eligible transport by the carer. The full cost of such a bus pass for school or college will be reimbursed. Where there is a delay in issuing a pass, carers will be reimbursed in full on submission of bus tickets for non-catchment school journeys.

## **6. ALLOWANCES FOR ABSENCES**

The weekly rate paid to carers where a child is temporarily absent from the foster home is the standard fostering maintenance allowance with the following exceptions:

### **6.1 Children in hospital**

Normal payments will be made for the first four weeks. Anything spent on comforts for the child, and travel to and from hospital, is to be met from these allowances. After four weeks, all allowances will be reduced by 50% unless there are exceptional circumstances.

### **6.2 Children attending boarding school or residential college**

Foster carers who offer a long-term placement and are regularly available for a child attending a boarding school, will receive retainers while the child is away at school. They are calculated as:

- Where a child is a term boarder, and is with the carers for the school holidays only, the retainer during the child's absence will be 25% of the Carer's Skills payment
- Where the child is a weekly boarder and with carers every weekend and school holidays, the retainer during the child's absence will be 50% of the normal allowance plus 50% of Carer's Skills payment.

Full allowances are payable while a child is with carers.

### **6.3 Children who go missing**

Payments will be paid to carers for a maximum period of four weeks when a child goes missing and the placement is held open. If it is agreed that the child or young person cannot return to the placement within this period, the carer will be available to take new placements and all payments will cease.

### **6.4 Payments for retaining foster carers when a child is placed at home with parents or others with parental responsibility**

Where a placement with foster carers needs to be retained as part of the Care Plan, all allowances will continue to be paid for the first seven days. After this, if the placement needs to be retained for a longer period up to a maximum of four weeks, the Carers Skills payment will be paid at the full rate plus 25% of the child's maintenance allowance.

### **6.5 Carers subject to allegations**

If a carer is subject to an allegation that necessitates the removal of the child to allow an investigation, the carer will be entitled to receive their skill level payment only, for a maximum of 12 weeks.

## 7. APPEALS REGARDING PAYMENT LEVELS

The fees will be paid as set out in this finance policy. For any carers who are unhappy with the payment level and wish to appeal, they should set out their appeal in writing within 28 days to:

### **Service Manager Service Manager, Fostering Service**

Room 600  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
LEICESTERSHIRE  
LE3 8RL

## 8. OVERPAYMENTS TO FOSTER CARERS

Overpayments are reclaimable and should be repaid in full immediately. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to recover the overpayment by instalments at the discretion of the Fostering Service Manager service Manager. Carers have a responsibility to notify their fostering social worker in the event of any over or underpayment, as soon as it comes to light.

## 9. SPECIALIST LEVEL CARE

Specialist Level Foster Carer is required to meet the need of a small number of children and young people who have particular needs that require particular skills and competencies from the carers. These children and young people's needs may also place significant restrictions on the foster carers' usual routine and family life. The Specialist Level Care offered by the Council is as follows:

- **One2One** – These carers provide foster care to young people as part of their step down from more intensive provisions like residential care. The placement is for up to one year. It is a single placement for our most challenging young people who have complex needs, can present as challenging, disruptive and at times, can pose a risk to themselves and others. One2One carers needs to be available 24 hours per day and cannot have another child or young person in placement. These placements are short-medium term to prepare a young person for a move into a more traditional family-based placement or return home. The carer is expected to work closely with the new carer or parent, depending on the care plan.

Payment: Retainer fee of £660 per week and the age related fostering allowance once a child is in placement.

**Pathway Carers** – These carers will work specifically with young people aged 15 plus, who may be new into care and more difficult to engage in a traditional parent-child relationship, may have had a number of placement disruptions, need a higher level of support to promote their education. These carers offer a long term placement to support young people to higher education or training/employment, to access services to meet health and emotional needs, and will have a focus on promoting independence.

Payment: £440 per week that a child is in placement plus fostering allowance.

- **Short Breaks** – These carers offer short break care to children who are either currently living in foster carer or who are living at home who, by virtue of a disability, require a short break to enable their parent or carer to continue to provide a high level of care. Short-breaks from home cannot exceed 80 days per year (S17 of Children Act).

There are two levels of short break carers, which reflect the complexity of the child or young person's disability and care needs.

Payment Level 1 –

- 24 hours - £105
- 48 hours - £210
- Each additional day- £60
- Weekly rate - £510

Payment Level 2 –

- 24 hours - £145
- 48 hours - £290
- Each additional day- £80
- Weekly rate - £690

- **Parent and Child Placements** - A parent and child placement ensures that parent and child can remain together whilst the parent is being assessed regarding their capacity and ability to provide safe and appropriate care. The parent and child will both live as part of the foster household. The foster carer will offer help, advice and support and role model good parenting. The placement will commence after a contract is agreed between the parent, the child's social worker, the supervising social worker and the foster carer.

Payment: The carer will receive a mainstream level 3 payment including the national minimum age related allowance for the child. The carer will also receive a fee of £434 for the adult. Additional parent in placement will be paid at a flat rate of £200 per week.

- **Out of Hours Carers (previous known as Emergency Duty carers)** – The Fostering Service provides a rota of carers who are available after hours and weekends to take emergency placements, including those young people who have been detained by the police. These carers are experienced in dealing with challenging behaviours and work closely with the police and other partner agencies. Children who are placed in this way are generally moved to a new placement or returned to their home or a family member on the next working day.

Payment: These carers receive £140 for being on-call for 7 days. If a child or young person is placed, they will receive a flat fee of £60 and an age related allowance. The total weekly payment is summarised below:

Age 0-4:	£509
Age 5-10:	£540
Age 11-15:	£589
Age 16+:	£654

## 10. OTHER PLACEMENT PROVISIONS

- **Supported Lodgings**

Supported Lodgings generally describes a situation where a young person, 16 and above, lives with a family or individual who has a spare room and is willing to provide informal guidance and practical assistance to young people who are ready to leave care or are homeless. The lodgings carer will help the young person develop the practical skills and emotional stability that they will need to make the transition to adulthood and successful independence

Payment: £240 per week.

- **Staying Put**

Staying Put describes the situation when a young people over 18 who was fostered and is in training or education wishes to remain with their foster carers. When a young person reaches the age of 18 they are no longer regarded as being in foster care as all Care Orders cease and parental responsibility ends. The legal basis for this arrangement is "excluded licensee" as young people are effectively lodging in the carers' home.

Full policy details are available and Staying Put carers become entitled to a Post 18 Providers Allowance.

Young people are expected to apply for housing benefit once they are 18 and they will be given help with this. If the claim is successful the amount received is deducted from the carers Post 18 Providers' allowance.

If a young person is in employment they will be supported to arrive at a private arrangement to remain with their ex-foster carers, but they will not receive funding from the Council.

Payment: £240 per week.

- **Respite**

This can be used to facilitate more support for carers when babysitting services are critically needed, for example, time for urgent medical appointments to provide shorter periods of care as needed.

Payment: £8 per hour

## **11. Carers Payment-for-Skill Level Descriptors**

### **Purpose:**

We believe that at some point in their development, all our children and young people will require a care informed by the skills, knowledge/training and capabilities as set out in the descriptors for level 1-3

The payment-for-skills pathway is a key part of our recruitment drive to recruit and retain experienced carers to meet the needs of the Council's children.

### **Standards:**

All skills, competencies and tasks listed below should be evidenced before progression to the next level.

### **Assessment and progression:**

All carers will have undergone a training-skills-task based assessment (based on the Descriptors below).

Determination to progress: A recommendation will be made by the supervising social worker to his or her manager. The manager will ensure that all three areas have been met and will evidence this on the carer's records. The views of all parties will be considered by the reviewing officer who will make a recommendation to the Fostering Service, Service Manager Service Manager.

Annual analysis of the needs of Leicestershire's children and young people in care will be completed to inform the number of Level 4 carers required. As a result the number of carers progressing to Level 4 may be set at an upper limit for each financial year.



LEVEL 1

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 3

LEVEL 4

<p><b>Skills to Foster – preapproval course</b></p> <p><b>Completion of Training, Support and Development Standards or equivalent.</b></p> <p>Completion of <b>core training</b> which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Aid</li> <li>• Allegations</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Record Keeping</li> <li>• Children’s Reviews</li> <li>• An education or health related course</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to Level 1 training, the carer will complete <b>advanced training</b> which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment and Development</li> <li>• An education or health related course</li> <li>• Child development</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity</li> <li>• Impact of Neglect</li> <li>• Managing Contact</li> <li>• Understanding behaviours that challenge</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to Level 2 training, the carer will complete <b>specialist training</b> as required including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment and Development/ Therapeutic parenting</li> <li>• Impact of Trauma and Neglect</li> <li>• or the equivalent of the above.</li> <li>• An education or health related course</li> </ul> <p>Other recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional Behavioural Disorders</li> <li>• E-Safety</li> <li>• Resolving Conflict</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to level 3 training, the carer will have completed training in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restorative Justice – developing skills and approaches as a means of resolving conflict and repairing them</li> <li>• PACE – playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy – PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make the child or young person feel safe</li> <li>• Fully engage with Therapeutic Parenting Model</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
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<sup>1</sup> New research or evidence may arise which necessitates amending the training offer or requirements.

A competency based assessment that demonstrates capacity to begin fostering and has been recommended by The Fostering Panel and approved by the Agency Decision Maker. Key competencies include:

- What do foster carers do?
- Identity and life chances
- Understanding and caring for children (difficult behaviour in the context of having suffered abuse; the care cycle – building sensitive, warm, trusting relationships)
- Safer Caring
- Managing Transition
- My Family Fosters (managing issues and implications for sons and daughters)
- Family and Friends – including managing contact, difficult and complex relationships.

In addition to level 1 skills, the carer is likely to have a minimum of one year's fostering experience during which time the carer will have demonstrated an ability to:

- Continued understanding and ability to consistently implement the competencies outlines in Level 1
- Promote positive outcomes in all areas of a child's needs including: development, health, cultural, identity, education, emotional stability.
- Build relationships with 'resistant' children and young people and work with birth family
- Demonstrate flexibility in their approach to their care depending on the needs of the child, including when difficult situations arise.

In addition to level 2 skills, the carer is likely to have a minimum of two years fostering experience during which time they will have demonstrated an ability to:

- Provide care for a child whose needs assessment indicates that the carer will be required to undertake specific tasks over and above the general care given to children of the same age
- Have insight into and the ability to offer care to children who present with deregulated behaviour or struggle to adjust to new situations or to manage transitions
- Demonstrate a sound understanding of a child's developmental needs and ability to demonstrate flexibility to meet these needs
- A willingness to offer a home to older children

In addition to Level 3 skills, the carer is likely to have a minimum of three fostering experience during which time they will have to demonstrate an ability to:

- Work as part of a team around the child, agreeing to implement a shared strategy/ approach to meeting the child's needs
- Assess the circumstance of an incident towards identifying an approach include PACE and Restorative Justice
- Prepare the child or young person and agree an approach
- Facilitate interaction within the agreed process
- Evaluate the outcome and deliver a flexible approach.

- To care for children or young people in accordance with their care plans
- To be aspirational for children or young people
- To communicate effectively with the professionals working with the children for whom they care
- To facilitate contact for children with their family and friends including sibling contact
- To maintain a placement to its planned ending
- To contribute to care planning meetings and Statutory Reviews
- To keep effective records and contribute to children's memories through the provision of photographs and other memorabilia
- To take responsibility for development as a foster carer alongside their fostering social worker.

- To be able to provide care for a child or young person whose assessed needs mean that that the carer will be required to undertake specific tasks over and above the general care given to children of the same age. This may include:
  - ✓ Undertaking speech and language programmes
  - ✓ Undertaking additional physical care or exercise
  - ✓ Attending frequent medical appointments
  - ✓ Supporting attendance /progress at school
  - ✓ Supporting therapeutic/life story work
  - ✓ Developing successful behaviour management strategies
- To maintain a record of the progress the child makes in relation to specific needs
- To contribute to the development of the fostering service by supporting information and recruitment events, mentoring and supporting other carers.

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In addition to the tasks in Level 2, to be able to provide care for a child or young person whose risk assessment indicates that the carer will need to provide a higher level of care and/or supervision than that generally given to children of the same age. Examples of this would be children with:

- ✓ Complex medical conditions
- ✓ Sexualised behaviour
- ✓ Aggressive behaviour towards other children
- ✓ Involvement in the criminal justice system
- To be able to provide care for a child about whom very little is known and to assist with the assessment of their needs
- To contribute to sibling assessments

In addition to the tasks in Level 3, to be able to provide care for a child or young person who may require high levels of care, monitoring and engagement with other professionals for example children and young people who are:

- Fully dependent on a carer due to disability or poor health
- Frequently missing from care
- Experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation
- Displaying sexual behaviour
- At risk of exploitation through gangs.

Additional expectations:

- ✓ Peer mentoring
- ✓ Contributes to the development of the department and service
- ✓ Supports with recruitment of foster carers and staff
- ✓ Ability to sustain positive relationships and maintain effective functioning through periods of turbulence
- ✓



