

Financial Information and Advice for Foster Carers April 21 – March 22

Fostering Minimum Weekly Allowances

As required by law, Nottinghamshire County Council will pay the National Minimum Fostering Allowances at the rate as determined by the Department for Education.

Allowances payable for the child

1. Basic fostering allowances and fostering supplement

In addition to the payment of the National Minimum Fostering Allowances (referred to in Nottinghamshire as the Basic Fostering Allowance), a fostering supplement of £10 per week per child will also be paid.

Foster carers can determine how this fostering supplement is used. Some foster carers might wish to save the supplement to put towards a foster child's holiday, some foster carers might wish to spend the supplement on additional activities for the foster child. Nottinghamshire County Council is not being prescriptive about how this supplement is used. Please see the table on page 2.

2. Annual festivities and birthday allowances

These allowances are to cover some of the extra costs associated with these occasions. They are extra amounts paid at the same rate as the basic fostering allowance.

The birthday allowance will usually be paid three weeks prior to the child's birthday. The birthday allowance will be paid up to and including the young person's 18th birthday.

The annual festivities allowance is paid in early December.

Table of Basic Fostering Allowances (BFA)

Age Group	0-4	5-10	11-15	16-17
BFA	£138.00	£152.00	£173.00	£202.00
Fostering Supplement	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00
Birthday Allowance	£138.00	£152.00	£173.00	£202.00
Festivities Allowance	£138.00	£152.00	£173.00	£202.00

Breakdown of Basic Fostering Allowances - these are the amounts that Nottinghamshire County Council considers are appropriate to meet the fostered child's weekly needs.

Age	0-4	5-10	11-15	16-17
Food	£39	£41	£45	£52
Clothing	£35	£40	£45	£50
Transport/Mileage*	£11.25	£11.25	£11.25	£11.25
Personal (including pocket money, activities)	£12.75	£19.75	£31.75	£48.75
Household (contribution towards Council Tax, utility bills, usual wear and tear in household)	£40.00	£40.00	£40.00	£40.00
Total	£138.00	£152.00	£173.00	£202.00

Weekly pocket money rates - (Provided for guidance only)

0-4	5-10	11-15	16-17
£2.00	£5.00	£9.00	£12.00

3. Emergency Clothing Grant

An emergency clothing grant of £50 per child, with provision to pay up to £100 per child if required, is available. It is only payable on a child's entry to care and is for the child's emergency and immediate clothing needs.

4. Annual Holiday Allowance

The amount paid will depend on the age of the child. It is paid once per financial year in addition to the BFA. Foster carers do not have to actually go away during the year to qualify for this allowance and should inform their child's social worker when they want it to be paid. It is normally only paid for children fostered in bridging or long-term placements and in certain circumstances may be paid pro-rata.

Age Group	2021-2022
0-4	£250
5-10	£300
11-15	£350
16-17	£400

5. Exceptional Payments

We will continue to have some provision available to provide additional financial support in exceptional circumstances. This exceptionality is not designed to replace additional allowances that will no longer be available.

Instances could include but are not exclusively limited to; residential/non-residential school trips, school bursaries and educational/training equipment. We will continue to cover/reimburse payments for statutory documents and life story work record keeping (i.e. identity work), for example, birth certificates, passports, school photos, driving licences. (NB. The cost of driving lessons is covered by the BFA).

If carers believe they require exceptional financial support, they are to discuss this with their supervising social worker in first instance.

6. Equipment

A grant will be available to equip new foster carers with equipment needed to care for ages of children and young people they are approved to care for. The maximum amount payable is £500.

The expectation is that foster carers will make their own financial arrangements to replace household equipment.

Nottinghamshire County Council will continue to pay for replacement cot mattresses and car seats.

Whilst the basic fostering allowance is intended to cover normal replacement of household equipment, it is not expected to cover the additional replacement costs caused by a child who has damaged household equipment.

Where the fostering service manager accepts that there are extra costs, in such circumstances, the options are:

- reimbursement through the foster carer's own insurance or the authority's insurance scheme
- an exceptional compensatory payment.

7. Education

All looked after children should have a personal education plan (PEP), which is the responsibility of the child or young person's social worker together with the designated teacher. This will identify the child's educational and developmental needs and contain personalised short and long-term targets which will inform the spending of the pupil premium for those eligible children/young people. Foster carers should be included in the meetings regarding a child's PEP.

From April 2011 the Government has been providing pupil premiums in order to improve looked after children's progress and attainment.

For the financial year 2020/2021, £2,345 is available for each looked after child. The school should be able to advise foster carers, and the child's social worker, how this additional funding is being used for the benefit of a foster child's learning through the personal education plan meetings.

A 16 to 19 bursary is available to young people continuing in education after their academic year 11.

8. Transport Costs

The basic fostering allowance includes an initial 25 miles per week travel allowance. Visits to hospital, special clinics, physiotherapist; attendance at case conferences and reviews of foster carers/child, visits to school, visits to relatives, social work meetings in respect of the child, expenses incurred when a child runs away, keeping contact with the child and travel to maintain a particular religion which incur additional/excess to these 25 miles per week can be claimed for.

*The rate of 45 pence per mile will be paid for agreed excess mileage where foster carers use their own vehicle. The cost of public transport for agreed travel will be reimbursed.

9. Large Families Transport Allowance

Foster families where the total number of carers (2 if a couple, 1 if a single carer) PLUS the number of the carer(s) own children (under 18 years) PLUS the number of foster children (under 18 years) is 6 or more, can apply for this allowance.

All foster carers can be paid this allowance if the eligibility criteria is met and whether or not a foster carer has their own transport. The allowance is designed to assist foster families, with large numbers of children, by providing an additional £43.50 per week. Foster carers, who are eligible for this allowance, can use the allowance to best meet their own circumstances.

If foster carers are, or become, eligible for this allowance, their supervising social worker will make the application for them.

10. Safety

All children must be kept safe inside and outside of the foster home.

All children must be safely transported. Additional safety installations may be needed to protect a disabled child.

It is important that foster carers talk to their supervising social worker about all aspects of caring safely for the child(ren) living with them, as financial assistance may be available to support them to do so.

11. Keeping Contact with the Child

Where the child is absent from the foster home and regular allowances have stopped, there may still be costs to the foster carers to keep contact with the child.

These will have previously been agreed with the children's service manager as part of the Authority's plan for the child.

12. Babysitting/Child Care Expenses

Babysitting/child care expenses are paid at £3.50 per hour per child.

Foster carers must have prior agreement from their supervising social worker, before babysitting/ child care arrangements can take place.

Fees to foster carers

The fee awarded to a foster carer is based on the foster carer's terms of approval, skill, experience and qualifications

Levels Payments

Payment for skills provides a career pathway for foster carers and recognises and rewards the skills, experience and training of a foster carer in the payment of a weekly fee. Most foster carers, unless approved under former fostering schemes, fostering futures, contract care and home from home provision, are paid under the payment for skills provision.

This fee is generally referred to as to the 'levels' fee. Foster carers receive a levels fee, linked to their level of approval, whenever a child is in placement with them. The annual foster carer review provides the opportunity to assess a foster carer's performance and decide if the foster carer has met the criteria to progress to the next level.

Level 1
Basic Fostering Allowance plus £28 per week per child
Level 2
Basic Fostering Allowance plus £57 per week per child
Level 3
Basic Fostering Allowance plus £113 per week per child aged 0-4 years and £139 per week per child aged 5-17.

Support Care

The financial arrangements for support care have changed. Foster carers who provide support care will still receive the basic fostering allowances plus their levels payment where

applicable and the new fostering supplement at a pro-rata rate depending on how many days of support care they are providing.

Example 1

Looked after child aged 9, placed with foster carer A, approved at Level 1, staying from Friday 4pm until Sunday 4pm (counted as three days)

£69.43 (BFA + fostering supplement pro rata)

£12.00 (Level 1 payment pro rata)

Total £81.43

Example 2

Looked after child aged 14, placed with foster carer B, approved at Level 2, staying from Friday 4pm until Sunday 12pm (counted as three days).

£78.43 (BFA + fostering supplement pro rata)

£24.43 (Level 2 payment pro rata)

Total £102.86

Example 3

Looked after children aged 3 and 8, placed with foster carer C, approved at Level 3, staying from Saturday 10am until Sunday 4pm (counted as two days)

£42.29 BFA plus fostering supplement pro rata

£32.29 Level 3 payment pro rata

£46.29 BFA plus fostering supplement pro rata

£39.71 Level 3 payment pro rata

Total £160.58

Contract Care*

Contract carers offer regular 'short breaks' for disabled children/young people whose needs are complex and challenging.

Contract carers work primarily from their home. A separate bedroom is needed, and contract carers are expected to be available four days (four nights) per week, which will include two weekends out of every four. Carers receive basic fostering allowances and fostering supplement, paid pro-rata, plus £23,036 - £27,036 annual fee.

Home from Home

Home from home foster carers provide a short break service to disabled children and receive an hourly fee of £4.50.

Foster carers for disabled children*

Foster carers for disabled children provide day to day physical, emotional and social care on a permanent, bridging or long-term basis for children whose needs are complex and challenging. A separate bedroom for the sole use of the child or young person is essential. Carers must have at least 2 years' experience caring for/working with other people's disabled children and have, or are willing to work towards, a relevant child care qualification. Carers are paid an annual fee of between £23,036 - £27,036 per annum, basic fostering allowances and fostering supplement.

Fostering Futures*

Fostering Futures foster carers must have experience of working with young people with complex emotional and behavioural need in a related professional context with relevant qualifications. Carers receive an annual fee starting at £24,804 per annum with increments paid each year of service for the first four years, basic fostering allowances and fostering supplement. Each foster child needs to have his/her own bedroom.

11plus*

This scheme was introduced in April 2014 and replaced the 14plus scheme. The 11plus fee is payable to a foster carer for a child aged 11 years and over at the point of placement. The foster carer needs to be home based, able to meet the child's transport needs and the child needs to have her/his own bedroom. The 11 plus fee is £200 per week/£10,400 per annum per child.

Terms and conditions apply.

*** These schemes are currently closed to new applicants**

In exceptional circumstances, when indicated by a child's needs and the foster carer's profile, a child specific fee can be considered for payment. The need for such a fee is usually recommended by the fostering team manager and agreed by the fostering service manager/group manager.

The individual needs of a child may mean that there are additional costs in caring for them. Consideration should be given to a child's eligibility for Disability Living Allowance or from June 2013, where aged over 16, Personal Independence Payments (PIP). If an award is made of either middle or high rate care for DLA or any care component for PIP, then some carers may have entitlement to Carers Allowance.

If DLA is not awarded, a request for an exceptional payment could be considered by the child's service manager.

Foster carers who claim working tax credits will need to check the new rules for Universal Credit which is rolling out across the country. For further benefit advice, foster carers are advised to contact The Fostering Network's advice line tel: 020 7401 9582 available between 10am-3pm, Monday to Friday.

Retainer Fees

A retainer fee is payable when a foster carer is suspended from active fostering (due to a complaint/allegation having been made against them), when the department has made a decision to actively retain a placement with the foster carer or when exceptional circumstances warrant consideration.

A retainer fee is usually commensurate to the foster carer's loss of fee income.

Sessional Fees

Where foster carers undertake a buddy visit, facilitate at a training event or take part in a recruitment presentation, they are entitled to a sessional payment of £22.31. A 'session' is 2 hours.

General financial advice and information

Payments

The child's social worker will set up all payments for the child placed with carers. Queries about the payments should be directed to the child's social worker.

For all new foster carers, payments are made by the Direct Banking System.

Foster carers can choose whether they would like their payments to be made weekly or four weekly. Payments made directly to foster carers bank accounts are usually made on the Friday of each week.

The weekly payment period is from a Monday to a Sunday.

Bank remittance slips

The remittance slip will show a breakdown of allowances paid for the child placed with you and to you as a foster carer. Remittance slips will be issued on a four-weekly basis.

Payment during child's absence

Allowances are not normally paid when the child is away from the foster home. There will however be exceptions such as:

Holiday absence

Where a child is absent from the foster home for more than one night (school outing, camp, etc.) and the foster carer has to meet all or some of the expenses incurred, although the basic fostering allowance may cease, these expenses can be reimbursed.

Missing from care

Where a child is absent from the foster home without authorisation for more than one night, the basic fostering allowance may cease. However, the foster carer may still be incurring

expenditure, and reasonable expenses will be recognised and reimbursed.

Hospitalisation of a Child

The basic fostering allowances automatically continue for two weeks but the children's service manager can extend these when the foster carers are still having to meet some or all of the costs.

Approved Support Care for the Child

The assessment of a child's needs can lead to a programme of support care being agreed. This type of foster care helps to support and maintain a child's main foster placement. Fostering allowances, and levels payments, are unaffected for the first 28 full days, in each financial year, when a child is away from his/her main foster placement for a period of support care.

Most support care arrangements take place at a weekend. A child who leaves his/her main placement on a Friday, and returns on a Sunday, is away from his/her main foster carer for one full day.

Foster carers who are unclear about any aspect of entitlement to payment when a child is absent from their care, should seek clarity with their supervising social worker.

Overpayment

Sometimes, overpayments of allowances occur because circumstances change quickly or because the payments team has not been told to stop the payments.

Foster Carers are paid on a Monday – Sunday basis, with payments going into the bank account on Friday. So, we pay 5 days in arrears and 2 days in advance.

Foster carers can help prevent this by calling the payments team directly on 0115 8043840 to tell them about any changes or by emailing the payments team on

CYPPayments@nottsgov.uk. Over payments will all be payable back by the following week's payment due date.

Tax Relief Scheme

The income tax scheme, that foster carers use, is called "qualifying tax relief".

Please see the leaflet *Qualifying Care Relief (Simplified Method) Tax Scheme for Foster Carers* factsheet or refer to www.hmrc.gov.uk or contact The Fostering Network's advice line tel: **020 7401 9582** available between 10am-3pm, Monday to Friday.

State pensions for carers

The department for works and pensions

www.dwp.gov.uk

The pension service for a pension forecast

www.direct.gov.uk

All foster carers need to register as self-employed with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. For further advice and assistance, please contact the following:

New registrations: 0300 200 3504

Registered foster carers: 0300 200 3310

Web: www.hmrc.gov.uk

For advice on Welfare Benefits:

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/benefitsadvice

Children placed with foster carers under Adoption and Children Act 2002 (after the Adoption Panel)

Fostering allowances will cease after the Adoption Panel and financial support for adopters will be paid from the date of the Adoption Panel.

Children placed with foster carers under Special Guardianship or other Order

Fostering allowances cease after a Special Guardianship or other Order (which means that

the child is no longer fostered) has been made by the courts.

Young people aged 18+

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers 2010 (Regulations and Guidance) required every local authority to have a Staying Put Policy that outlined how the authority would promote the extension of foster care placements beyond a young person's 18th birthday.

For a young person living in foster care, the first Looked after Child Review following his or her 16th birthday should consider whether a Staying Put placement is likely to be an option post 18 years.

Funding of Staying Put Placements:

Special Education Extension Funding

Where a young person turns 18, and is in full time education, the funding for the placement will remain the same until the end of the academic year in which they turned 18. (Last Friday in July). There is no expectation for the young person to claim Income Support – all payments will remain the same to ensure there is as little disruption to the young person as possible.

Staying Put

Where the special education extension funding does not apply, the total amount paid to the Staying Put provider is made up of 3 amounts:

- **Staying Put Allowance:** The staying put allowance is paid direct to the Provider by the authority. It is currently £94 per week.
- **Food and Utilities:** Each young person is expected to pay a contribution of £30 from their own income (either from work or from benefits) to cover the cost of food and utilities.
- **Rent:** Rent for the room will be paid direct to the staying put provider by the young person from their own income (either

housing benefit or wages) and is usually based on local housing allowance – this amount varies across the districts (approximately £70).

These amounts are calculated to ensure that the total income received by the Staying Put provider equates to the fostering rate for 16-17-year olds.

Payment/Financial Enquiries:

Foster Carers are paid on a Monday – Sunday basis, with payments going into the bank account on Friday. So, we pay 5 days in arrears and 2 days in advance.

Foster carers can contact the payments team for clarification about fostering payments or their supervising social worker for queries including responsibilities/future entitlements as a foster carer.

The payments team can be reached on 0115 8043840

Email: CYPPayments@nottsc.gov.uk

Discounts and Deals

All our foster carers are entitled to a MAX card which gives discounts locally and nationally.

There are also some local businesses that offer a discount to staff and foster carers. Please visit the 'support and benefits page on the FANotts website for details.

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/fanotts>

Please always contact the provider in advance to ensure that the discount is still in place and have your ID badge with you.

Fostering Network Membership

All NCC foster carers are automatically made members of the Fostering Network upon approval. As a member of The Fostering Network, foster carers have access to a variety of benefits. For further details visit:

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/membership/foster-carer-membership>