

Summary of Allowances Provided to

Early Permanence Foster Carers (EPC)

2022 - 23

# EARLY PERMANENCE FINANCIAL SUPPORT is made up of 2 parts

1. A fostering fee of £153.30 per week

2. A maintenance allowance dependent on age of the child/children

# MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES - AGE of CHILD or CHILDREN

Under 5 yrs £135.03 per week

5-10 yrs £149.03 per week

Weekly fostering allowance covers maintenance, clothing, food and pocket money for the child, nappies for younger children and an allowance towards increased heating, lighting, laundry, wear and tear on furniture, cost of entertainment, transport and school outings. – see FAQ

Where a child is admitted to hospital the usual fostering allowances are payable up to a maximum of 4 weeks and thereafter at the discretion of the

Head of Service

# EPC and TAX REQUIREMENTS

You must register as self-employed from the date you become approved as an EPC. The Inland Revenue have set up a tutorial site, so that foster carers are aware of their responsibilities and what to expect, the link is:

[http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/courses/syob3/fc/index.htm.](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/courses/syob3/fc/index.htm) Even if you are already self-employed please still go through the tutorial as the rules and regulations with foster carers are totally different to “normal” self- employed rules and regulations.

EPC will have their own particular circumstances and they should look into their entitlements and what their employers offer individually. However the legal premise is that any entitlement they have to adoption leave and pay can start from the point of the fostering placement and does not have to wait until a child has a placement order and a matching certificate has been issued. The panel or ADM decision to place the child with you triggers the entitlement to statutory adoption leave and pay and any entitlements that you will have from your employers.

Only one set of statutory adoption leave, pay or paternity leave can be taken per placement, therefore EPC carers cannot take leave, pay or paternity leave at the time of the fostering placement and again when matched for adoption.

If you are entitled to adoption leave and pay from your employers, the same rules apply as with statutory leave, pay and paternity leave.

From the date that the child/ren are placed with you as an EPC you will received Birmingham City Council’s fostering rates and you must decide based on your individual circumstances and in consultation with your Social Worker whether you will apply for Adoption Pay and Leave at the same time.

Where the court makes a Placement Order the fostering allowance and maintenance payment will cease at an agreed date following panel decision making.

# Change of Care Plan to rehabilitation to a family member

If the placement ends due to the child returning to birth family fostering payments will cease at the date the child/ren returns, adoption leave can continue for 8 weeks after the child is moved (or earlier, if fewer than 8 weeks of adoption leave remains). Adoption pay can also continue for 8 weeks, unless the full amount of adoption pay ceases earlier than this*.*

# CHILDREN JOINING OR LEAVING YOUR CARE: PHONE 0121 303 5313

Please telephone Business Support who oversee all financial payments to let them know the child has arrived in your care or has left in a planned move as soon as possible. This will ensure that over and under payments are not made to you.

# SETTLING IN GRANT eg equipment

A one off settling in grant will be paid to **EARLY PERMANENCE CARERS** following the Agency Decision to Match

£500 per child

# IMMEDIATE PLACEMENT

Wherever possible you will be transporting your child to contact, attending clinics, review meetings. It is appreciated that you may occasionally incur other expenditure in meeting their fostering responsibilities which are not covered by the weekly allowance. The following are examples and the rates that are currently payable.

Loss of Earnings £33 per day

Car Mileage 45p per mile

Expense claims should be submitted regularly (during monthly supervision). Where any expense claims are made more than 3 months after the expenditure was incurred Head of Service authority is required for the payment to be made.

# CONTACT COSTS (to be claimed via Form SS412)

Where expenses have been incurred in connection with birth family contact these should be submitted separate to other expenses as they are allocated differently for budget purposes.

**Car and Travel Insurance EPC** must have fully comprehensive insurance with business use cover. You must ensure you have travel insurance for holidays taken abroad with foster children.

# Receipts – when are they required?

If a payment is an ‘allowance’ it does not have to be receipted, however, if a carer is claiming reimbursement of expenditure incurred then receipts should be provided. Where receipts don’t need to be provided supervising SWs should be satisfied that the money has been appropriately spent

# Nursery fees

Nursery fees are payable if attendance at nursery is part of the Care Plan for the child. The EPC should submit expenses claims accompanied by the receipt. Circumstances are subject to review after 3 months.

# Payments Cut-off

Cut-off point for payments to be input is usually midday on Thursdays (Bank Holiday weeks have an earlier cut- off). This means that items submitted for payment need to be with the payments staff by the end of a Wednesday afternoon to be completed in time for cut-off. Items input and authorised on Thursday are paid to bank accounts to credit usually by the Friday 8 days later

# Payment Audits

Every month during supervision Social Workers are required to conduct payments monitoring with all foster carers. Supervising SWs and carers are both required to sign and date indicating payments being made are correct every 2 months on a pay advice audit copy distributed by Business Support.

**Early Permanence Consultation**

**Date of Consultation**

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| **Name of the child(ren)** |  |
| **Date of birth** |  |

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| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Role / relationship** |
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| **What is the purpose of this meeting?** |
| Where Birmingham Children’s Trust has considered the suitability of all birth family members and connected persons as permanent caregivers for the child AND concluded that it is unsafe for the child to live with birth parents, birth family members or other connected persons AND has no plan for reunification BUT does not yet have authority (parental consent or Placement Order) to place the child for adoption THEN under the Children and Families Act 2014, the Trust MUST consider placing the child with an Early Permanence Carer. (See Children and Social Work Act 2017, Section 9, amending section 1(f) Adoption and Children Act 2002).  Early Permanence is under consideration in this case and may be viable, therefore it is essential that consultation takes place with the birth parents, including fathers without parental responsibility and any other significant connected persons, to ensure that they understand the Early Permanence proposal. |

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| **Summary of the key discussion points / observations / feedback received.** |
| * Early Permanence Carers are approved to foster and adopt though when the placement is made, it is done so under fostering not adoption regulations; * Early Permanence Carers do not have any parental responsibility for the child, they take instructions from BCT, comply with any court directions, consider any parental requests, facilitate contact and support reunification to the birth family where agreed; * Early Permanence Carers are considered to be the best option for the child as it is the view of BCT that it is unlikely that the child will return to the birth parents or a birth relative or other connected person; * Despite Early Permanence being promoted as a viable permanence option, the child’s final Care Plan has not yet been agreed by the Court; * Only when and if the Court decides that adoption is in the child’s best interests and grants a Placement Order or when and if parental consent has been made explicit, will BCT move forward with plans to change the status of the Early Permanence Carers to prospective adopters; * The child’s Social Worker and the Adoption Service will make a final assessment as to whether the Early Permanence Carers are suitable to adopt before proceeding with the usual tasks to match the child at a Permanency Panel; * It is only when the match has been recommended at a panel and agreed by an agency decision maker that the status of the placement changes from fostering to adoption and only when an Adoption Order granted that the former Early Permanence Carers take on full legal responsibility for the child * Further support about Early Permanence is available to the birth family from the child’s Social Worker |

**Views of those in Attendance**

**Outcomes of the Consultation**

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| **Actions** | | |
| **Action** | **Person With Responsibility** | **Timescale** |
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