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**April 2023 v.3**

**Financial Support to Carers during an Investigation following an allegation against a carer and/or a Standards of Care concern.**

This information should be read in conjunction with the [Surrey Allegation Against Foster Carers Supported Lodgings and Prospective Adopters](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/surreycs/doc-library/#collapse5_1) including the [Early Permanence Policy 2021](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/surreycs/doc-library/#collapse5_2) (Foster2Adopt). The [“On-hold” and Suspension Guidance](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/surreycs/doc-library/#collapse5_1) should also be referenced when reading this document.

In recognition that Foster Carers may have their fostering approval suspended during an investigation, and of the financial hardship that may be encountered whilst an allegation or standard of care is being investigated the following will apply:

**1. Investigations following an allegation**

1.1 Where a child is removed from the care of a Foster Carer as a result of an allegation, Surrey County Council will continue to pay the Foster Carers Skill Fee for a period of **12 weeks** with the intention of the investigation being concluded and returned to panel in this time frame. If a conclusion has not been reached within 12 weeks, a further period of payment may be made at the discretion of the Assistant Director for Fostering.

1.2 When an allegation is made against a Foster Carer who currently has no children in placement, but the carer is on the vacancy list, and their approval is suspended during the period of investigation, Surrey County Council will continue to pay the Foster Carers Skill Fee for *up to* two vacancies (other than where approval is for 1 child or 2 if siblings) for a period of **12 weeks** with the intention of the investigation being concluded and returned to panel in this time frame. If a conclusion has not been reached within 12 weeks, a further period of payment may be made at the discretion of the Assistant Director for Fostering.

1.3 When an allegation is made against a Foster Carer during a period of time that the carer has chosen to be “on hold” as per the “Guidance regarding Foster Carers on Hold” documentation, and the foster carers approval is suspended during the course of the investigation, no payment will be made to the carer unless the Foster Carer makes a specific request in writing to the service. The outcome to this request will be at the discretion of the Assistant Director for Fostering.

**2. Standards of Care Investigations**

2.1 Where a foster carers approval is suspended due to a Standards of Care investigation, Surrey County Council will continue to pay the Foster Carers Skill Fee for an initial period of **28 days** with the intention of the Standards of Care investigation being concluded in this time frame. If a conclusion has not been reached after 28 days, or it needs to be returned to panel, a further period of payment may be made at the discretion of the Fostering Service Manager.

2.2 If a Standards of Care concern is received during a period of time that the carer has chosen to be “on hold” as per the “Guidance regarding Foster Carers on Hold” and the carers approval is suspended whilst the investigation is ongoing, the same rules will apply as described in paragraph 1.3 with the amended time frame of 28 days for Standards of Care investigations and at the discretion of the Fostering Service Manager.

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Changes to be implemented from 01 April 2023