

Progression for Foster Carers

2023 - 2024



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Introduction

All approved carers receive a fee commensurate with their skills level. A fee is paid in respect of each child placed with a carer. For details of skills payments, please see the section '**Career and Finances**' online at www.fostersandwell.co.uk.

Our policy and fee schemes are structured around the skills and availability of the carers to meet the needs of a wide range of children of different ages and varying needs. There is a greater degree of flexibility within the assessment for a connected carer compared to a mainstream carer. For example, it may be appropriate to approve a much older or much younger relative for a specific child; a relative with a criminal conviction or who smokes may also be approved. Such flexibility would not be given in the case of someone applying to be a mainstream carer.

This approach is reflected in the statutory guidance which states that:

"A different approach may be needed to assessing family and friends foster carers compared to other foster carer applications. The format used by local authorities for presenting assessment reports to the fostering panel may not be appropriate for family and friends assessments if it does not allow for a focus on how the needs of a specific child will be met."

Connected carers can be considered as mainstream carers and move through the skill levels should they meet the eligibility criteria e.g. have the physical space and be available to meet the needs of a wide range of children of different ages and varying needs.

Mainstream carers can move through the skill levels and this allows carers to move up levels and where not meeting the eligibility criteria for the level to move down levels.

Regulation 24/25 carers

Where carers are 'Temporarily Approved' as foster carers, under Regulation 24 this is for a period of 16 weeks and may be extended through Regulation 25 for a further 8 weeks. Carers are paid the age related maintenance payment for the child/ren in their care. Any additional expense requests are considered by the child/ren's social work team manager and paid from their budgets.

Temporarily approved carers are not paid the fee element until they are recommended for approval at the Fostering Panel and the decision has been made by the Agency Decision maker that they are approved as foster carers.

Level 1

Once approved at Fostering Panel Connected Carers are eligible for a Level 1 skill level payment.

Connected carers must complete the following:

- TSD standards portfolio which is signed off and verified by the fostering team manager / registered manager within 18 months of approval.

Core training;

- Paediatric First Aid Module 1
- Safeguarding CYP level 2
- Equality, Diversity & Cultural Competence
- Risk Management & Safer Caring

Connected carers must undertake regular training to support their own professional development and this must be evidenced within their Personal Development Plan (PDP)

Carers must:

- Support child/ren's health and education including transporting them to appointments / school.
- Support family time
- Maintain regular recordings
- Support all aspects of the Child/ren's care plan
- The evidence will be presented at the foster carer review.
- Connected Carers must continuously work to improve outcomes for children.

All of the above must be evidenced at the foster carer review.

Level 2

Mainstream foster carers are approved to meet the needs of a wide range of children of different ages and varying needs. Once approved at Fostering Panel Mainstream Carers are eligible for a Level 2 skill level payment.

Mainstream foster carers must:

Complete TSD standards portfolio which is signed off and verified by the fostering team manager / registered manager within 12 months of approval.

Complete core training:

- Paediatric First Aid Module 1
- Safeguarding CYP Level 2
- Equality, Diversity & Cultural Competence
- Risk Management & Safer Caring

Undertake regular training to support their own professional development and this must be evidenced within their Personal Development Plan (PDP). This should include child development and the impact of trauma on children's development for both the main carer and second carer.

- Support child/ren's health and education by transporting them to appointments/school.
- Support family time
- Maintain regular recordings
- Support all aspects of the Child/ren's care plan
- Attend and contribute to support groups (attending a minimum of 50%)
- Support foster carer recruitment

All the above must be evidenced at the foster carer review.

To progress carers must present a portfolio of their CPD and a supporting report from their SSW which is signed off by the team manager and registered fostering manager.

The foster carer must continuously work to improve the outcomes for children.

Level 3

Carers will need to have the skills to offer a foster placement with specialized and complex care arrangements (this may be a suitable entry level for an experienced foster carer/childcare worker)

- Have completed the requirements of Level 2
- Keep a CPD portfolio
- Main carer to aim to complete at least 3 training courses outside of mandatory training (second carer 1 or 2 training courses) which are identified in consultation with the Foster Carers Supervising Social Worker.
- Have completed training on child development and the impact of trauma on children's development
- Completed Secure Base training
- PREVENT training
- Support foster carer training including Skills to Foster.

And:

- Support child/ren's health and education by transporting them to appointments/school.
- Support family time
- Maintain regular recordings
- Support all aspects of the Child/ren's care plan
- Attend and contribute to mainstream support groups

All the above must be evidenced at the foster carer review.

To progress carers must present a portfolio of their CPD and a supporting report from their SSW which is signed off by the team manager and registered fostering manager.

The foster carer must continuously work to improve the outcomes for children.

Level 4

Carers will need to have the skills to offer a foster placement to:

- Children with additional complex needs
- These children will have experienced more severe early life trauma, numerous moves, likely to be older children and/or have complex emotional/health needs that require additional ongoing support.

Carers must be responsible for their own development and maintaining their CPD and will need to:

- Have completed the requirements of Level 3
- Complete a therapeutic parenting course
- Be trained in managing challenging behaviour
- Complete specialist training in relation to the child/ren they are caring for e.g. caring for children with physical/emotional difficulties
- Support foster carer training including Skills to Foster.

And:

- Support child/ren's health and education by transporting them to appointments/school.
- Support family time
- Maintain regular recordings
- Support all aspects of the Child/ren's care plan
- Attend and contribute to mainstream support groups
- Support foster carer recruitment

All the above must be evidenced at the foster carer review.

To progress carers must present a portfolio of their CPD and a supporting report from their SSW which is signed off by the team manager and registered fostering manager.

The foster carer must continuously work to improve the outcomes for children.

Level 5

Carers must continue to meet the criteria for the above levels (this level may be suitable for a carer who has a high level of experience and up to date training relevant to caring for children with a high level of complex needs).

Carers will need to offer placements to children with additional complex needs including those identified in level 4 and consider:

- Children with diagnosed complex emotional/physical health needs
- Children who have experienced a high level of disrupted care
- Children with specialized and complex care arrangements
- Larger sibling groups

Carers must:

- Complete mandatory training
- Have completed, booked onto or be in the process of completing a therapeutic parenting course
- Be trained in understanding exploitation
- Have completed, booked onto or in the process of completing level 1 and level 2 Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP)
- Be available to attend regular multi-agency meetings about the child
- Keep a CPD portfolio
- Support foster carer recruitment
- Support child/ren's health and education by transporting them to appointments/school.
- Support family time
- Maintain regular recordings
- Support all aspects of the Child/ren's care plan
- Support foster carer recruitment and training

All the above must be evidenced at the foster carer review.

To progress carers must present a portfolio of their CPD and a supporting report from their SSW which is signed off by the team manager and registered fostering manager.

The foster carer must continuously work to improve the outcomes for children.

Emergency Duty Service

On duty for 28 days and paid at level 5

Resting period of 1 week and paid at level 4

Child maintenance is paid when a child/young person is in placement



Level 6

Specialist Fostering

Carers must continue to meet the criteria for the above levels (this level may be suitable for a carer who has a high level of experience and up to date training relevant to caring for children with a high level of complex needs e.g. residential/youth workers).

Children where:

- Bespoke profiling has taken place
- Step-down from residential
- Remand/PACE/Child Exploitation

They will:

- provide a high-level therapeutic parenting
- be part of regular multi-agency group/meetings (Health/Education support)
- be provided with access to regular therapeutic/psychological support

Parent & Child Placement: Level 6

This is a Parent and Child placement where there is an expectation that the carer contributes to the parenting assessment.

Parent looked after = Fee and maintenance (parent and child)

Parent not looked after = Fee and maintenance (child) + payment for the parent in line with Sandwell Children's Trust staying put payment (plus, parent makes rent payments from any benefit monies they receive)

Additional Out of Hours Support

Any carer who is not an emergency out of hours carer, that takes a child out of hours should be provided with a £50 placement payment.