

## **PAYMENTS TO FOSTER CARERS**

### **Key legislation, guidance & case law**

Care Standards Act 2000  
Children Acts 1989 & 2004  
Children & Young Persons Act 2008  
Local Authorities Social Services Act 1970  
Equality Act 2010  
Care Planning, Placement & Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 (“2010 Regulations”)  
Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (“2011 Regulations”)  
Children Act Guidance  
National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services  
Family & Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities  
R (X) v Tower Hamlets LBC [2013] EWHC 480 (Admin); [2013] EWCA Civ 904

### **Applies to:**

Foster Carers approved under reg. 27 of the 2011 Regulations;  
Foster Carers temporarily approved under reg. 24 of the 2010 Regulations.

**Commencement date:** 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**Current review date:** 12.06.24

**Next review due:** 12.06.25

## **INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** This policy supersedes and replaces with effect from the above commencement date all previous policies on the provision of payments to persons approved by Bradford Children & Families Trust (BCFT) as foster carers in accordance with reg. 27 of the 2011 Regulations, or temporarily approved under reg. 24 of the 2010 Regulations. It applies to both unrelated (“Mainstream”) and related (“Kinship”) foster carers and to both long-term and short-term placements. This policy does not apply to foster carers commissioned from Independent Fostering Agencies who will have their own foster carer policies and procedures in place.

**1.2** This policy also provides internal guidance for BCFT officers and others as to payments to foster carers.

**1.3** In formulating this policy BCFT has had due regard to, and intends to continue to have due regard to, its public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010.

**1.4** BCFT invites feedback on the operation of this policy and any views or comments should be addressed either to the supervising social worker (“SSW”) or

Linzi Nicholson, Foster for Bradford Service Manager. All such feedback will be taken into account when the policy is reviewed.

## PAYMENTS

**2.1** This policy applies to three types of payment: “maintenance allowance”; “professional fee” and “additional allowance”. The maintenance allowance is graduated according to the age of the child and is based upon the DfE recommended weekly allowance. It is subject to periodic review in accordance with the National Minimum Fostering Allowance.

**2.2** The professional fee (sometimes referred to as the “skills fee”) is a reward payment based upon a tiered professional development programme with provision for movement between tiers. The full fee is paid for the first child and an extra 50% is paid for each subsequent child.

**2.3** The additional allowance is paid on a case-by-case basis.

**2.4** All four categories of payment are available to all types of foster carers.

**2.5** The current rates are as follows:

### Maintenance Allowance

Age 0-4	Age 5-10	Age 11-15	Age 16-17
£170	£187	£213	£249

### Professional Fees

Level	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children
Entry Level	£120.16	£180.24	£240.32
1	£177.40	£266.10	£354.80
2	£251.28	£376.52	£502.56
3	£357.68	£536.52	£715.36

### Additional Allowances

These payments include:

- Birthday, holiday, and religious festival payments together equal to 4 x the weekly fostering maintenance allowance per annum. The amount paid is dependent on the age of the child.
- Up to 4 weeks per annum skills payments for annual leave.
- Up to 12 weeks paid retainer set at the foster carers skills fee level once a child has left the fostering household. However, if no children are placed within the first 6 week period the retainer is reduced by 50%. If no child is placed within a further 6 week period the retainer payment is ceased.

- Exceptional travel expenses
- Discretionary payments, e.g. school uniform and initial clothing allowances, school trips etc.

**2.6** It should be noted that where overpayments are made, BCFT will recoup monies overpaid as standard. The carer will be contacted about such overpayments as and when they occur.

## **COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK**

**3.1** See Annex A. The framework sets out the key factors for determining tier level. Foster carers should speak with their SSW if they consider that they have other relevant skills or attributes not listed in the framework. Evidence of competency can also be drawn from foster carers' annual reviews and other feedback received. Progression through the framework is achieved by meeting the requirements of the new skill level.

**3.2** Most foster carers will be approved at Entry Level. Some prospective foster carers may have significant experience of providing childcare or possess other transferable skills from other settings and have relevant qualifications. In these circumstances it may be possible for a new foster carer to be approved at a higher skills level provided they are able to provide evidence that they can meet the criteria for that level. Possible examples are a registered childminder or a teacher.

**3.3** Foster for Bradford will be responsible for ensuring that foster carers are given sufficient support and encouragement towards professional development through the provision of training opportunities commensurate with the skills level required. SSWs will also work with their foster carers to produce a personal development plan.

**3.4** Foster carers can request that they are progressed to the next skills level at any point in the year and do not have to wait for the foster carers annual review. However, foster carers are required to have completed the Training Support and Development Standards ("TSDs") workbook within one year of initial approval (extended to 18 months in respect of kinship foster carers) before progression and any other mandatory training courses relevant their current skills level.

**3.5** Skills progression will be based upon self-assessment using the form at Annex 2. Completion of this form should be discussed with the SSW and the form must be signed and dated as each competency is completed. The SSW should also request testimonials from other professionals regarding the care given or training received. Testimonials can be provided by the Child's Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer, school, or other foster carers. Feedback documents produced by these professionals for the purpose of the foster carers annual review can be used for this purpose rather than duplicating work.

**3.6** The completed form should be returned to the SSW who will comment on the outcomes of any allegations or complaints against the foster carer in the last year. They will also note any compliments or commendations received by the foster carer and summarise the testimonials received.

The SSW will then make their recommendations and give their reason for their recommendation and pass the assessment to the Team Manager for quality assurance.

The Team Manager will in turn make a recommendation and pass the assessment to the Foster for Bradford Service Manager for the final decision.

The Service Manager will record their decision and their reason for it on the assessment form. The payment progression will be effective from the date of the Service Manager's agreement.

This will then be communicated to the SSW and the foster carer payments team. The SSW will inform the foster carer.

Should the Service Manager decide not to progress the foster carer to the next level, the foster carer can make written representations within 28 days of the decision.

The decision will then be reviewed by the Head of Service and a final decision made.

**3.7** In a case where Foster for Bradford is considering stepping down a foster carer from a skill level to a lower level, the SSW should discuss this with the foster carer in the first instance. The SSW should set out to the foster carer the reasons for the 'step down' and complete a PDP clearly outlining expectations.

Where there is no improvement, the SSW should complete the payment for skills level self-assessment form with the foster carer for the level the foster carer is currently on. This should then be presented to the Team Manager for recommendation and passed to the Service Manager for decision.

**3.8** Should the foster carer disagree with any decision they can make representations to Foster for Bradford within 28 days of the decision being communicated to them. The decision will then be reviewed by the Head of Service and a final decision made.

**Signed** .....

**Patsy Burrows**



**Assistant Director  
Corporate Parenting**

**Dated .....**