

Practice Guidance for Foster Carer Annual Leave

The purpose of this guidance is to provide clarity around the processes for foster carers to take their annual leave entitlement over a 12-month period.

Annual Leave Entitlement

In the Foster Carer Handbook – Money Matters & Insurance chapter it stipulates that foster carers are entitled to:

Up to 28 days' holiday pay per annum (skills payment only) (section 2.4)

The leave period should be calculated from 1st April to 31st March each year.

The leave will also be pro rata from the point of approval.

Annual Leave Requests and Notification to SSW/Fostering Service

A foster carer should discuss their intentions and requests regarding when they would like to take their annual leave with their SSW during their supervision visits.

When considering taking their annual leave and planning for their fostered child(ren), the foster carer should consider their Back-Up Carers (BUCs) in the first instance. It is in children and young people's best interests to stay for extended periods with people they know.

Where alternate foster carers (respite) are required, the SSW must make enquiries initially with any foster carers who have previously cared for the child/young person before consulting with the Placement team about a search. The task of liaising with previous foster carers. should not be undertaken by the foster carer.

The foster carer should give at least 8 – weeks' notice when making an annual leave request. This is expected for leave periods where BUCs or alternate foster carers (respite) are being considered or where the child/children are going on the holiday as this allows sufficient time for necessary risk assessments, matching and permissions etc to be achieved.

There is an expectation that any annual leave requests for 2-weeks or over should be referred to a Fostering Service Manager for consideration and agreement. For agreement to be given a clear plan as to how the child/young person's needs will be met during the leave period should be provided.

Any requests received within the 8-week notice period should give very careful consideration as to the needs of the fostered child(ren), young person and whether the short-notice is likely to impact on their emotional well-being as planning could be impacted.

Holiday Risk Assessment

The SSW must complete the Holiday Risk Assessment form which can be found on the Child's file on LCS. This form must be sent to the SSW's team manager for sign off. It should be sent at least 2-weeks prior to the holiday commencing.

Tracking Annual Leave Days and Payments

It is the foster carers responsibility to count the number of annual leave days they take over the 12-month period.

When carers wish to take their leave, they must complete a Foster Carer Annual Leave Notification form (Appendix A) and forward to their SSW via email.

The SSW must sign and then forward the Foster Carer Annual Leave Notification form to Fostering Finance so the carers' leave can be tracked by the service and relevant payments be made.

Fostering Finance will ensure the carer is paid the skills allowance during the annual leave period. The carers will not receive the maintenance part of the foster carer allowance as the fostered child/young person will not be in their care.

If a foster carer does not take all of the 28-days entitlement over the 12-month period, the leftover days cannot be carried over to the next 12-months. The carers also will not be paid in lieu of the leftover days. The days will effectively be lost.

Appendix A

ANNUAL LEAVE NOTIFICATION

To be completed by foster carer(s) at least 8 weeks prior to the leave commencing

Carer's name:	Address:
Telephone No:	Postcode:
<p align="center">Annual leave entitlement is 28 days per year (pro-rata) April to March (annual leave cannot be carried over from one year to the next)</p>	
<p align="center">DETAILS OF LEAVE BEING TAKEN</p> <p align="center">Any leave taken when you have a vacancy will be deducted from your leave entitlement.</p> <p align="center">All annual leave is counted in overnight stays and starts on the day that you drop off the child/young person, the return to fostering date is the date the child / young person returns to you.</p>	

First day of leave (date – inclusive)	Last day of leave (date – inclusive)	Date of return to fostering (if alternative carer used)	No. of days taken (inclusive)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLEASE RECORD BELOW THE DETAILS OF <u>ALL</u> CHILDREN CURRENTLY PLACED WITH YOU IF THE CHILDREN ARE REMAINING WITH YOU DURING THIS PERIOD OF LEAVE, PLEASE RECORD ALTERNATIVE CARER AS “N/A” (Not applicable) IF THE CHILDREN ARE MOVING TO AN ALTERNATIVE CARER, PLEASE RECORD THE CARER’S DETAILS BELOW (if known) 			
Child’s Full Name: Name and address of alternative carer is:			
Child’s Full Name: Name and address of alternative carer is:			
Child’s Full Name: Name and address of alternative carer is:			
All leave placements must be authorised by the Fostering Service. Has your supervising social worker authorised this leave?			YES / NO

Signed _____ Foster Carer Date _____

Name of Fostering Supervising Social Worker _____

ADMIN ONLY:	Spreadsheet	Database (event log)	ContrOcc (main)
	ContrOcc (alt)	LCS notification	Scanned