

# Payments to Foster Carers

1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Allowances are given for fostering in recognition of the additional costs that children in care can bring and do not generally include a reward element. Allowances will be paid directly into your bank account. Details of other specific payments are included in the relevant section of this booklet. **Payments are made via BACS directly into your account. The payment week runs from Sunday to Saturday and carer's payments are received by Friday of that week.**

**To avoid confusion, if you have queries about payments you should address them in the first place to your Supervising Social Worker (SSW) and not to the Payments Team.**

Any other payments require approval by the relevant manager. Despite the current economic situation, the Council have been able to support a rise for mainstream allowances for 2021/2022

## 2 THE WEEKLY RATES (as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 )

### 2.1 Allowances

The allowances for mainstream foster carers are as follows:

Age	Amount
0-4 years	£150.10
5-10 years	£170.64
11-15 years	£212.17
16+ years	£257.97

The above allowances cover the following additional costs of caring for a child or young person:

- Food, including school meals.
- Clothing, for further details see paragraph 2.4.
- Household expenditure (electricity, gas, TV, telephone, toiletries etc).
- Personal expenditure such as pocket money, gifts, magazines, low cost clubs & activities. If the child in placement undertakes one more expensive activity the fostering service will give consideration to covering this cost if it has been previously agreed with your SSW.
- Routine travelling expenses including school bus fare, but excluding specialist appointments e.g. CAMHS, regular hospital visits.
- Day trips including school trips.
- Transporting children to school within a 3 mile radius. Mileage for transporting children outside the 3 mile limit should be agreed upon placement.

In exceptional circumstances, where the team manager considers the behaviours of the child require additional expenditure, an enhanced rate may be payable (Specific Child Rate) currently paid at £270.00 per week. You will be advised upon placement of the child if this rate is applicable. As the child's needs change, this will be regularly reviewed. This enhanced level of payment will also be made where carers are linked at panel for permanence with children who have been waiting for a permanent placement for over six months.

## 2.2 An additional four weeks age related allowances will be paid to cover:

**Christmas or another religious festival** – one week paid in early December or the month during which the festival occurs.

If you take a placement after that date, this will be added to your regular weekly allowance. If a child moves during the 2 week period prior to Christmas day, it is expected that any presents purchased will be transferred with him/her. However, if he/she leaves before this period, the allowance will be recovered if there is no evidence of the child being in possession of the gifts.

**Birthdays** – one week paid in the week immediately prior to the child's birthday.

**Holidays** – 2 weeks to be paid on the Friday before the start of the school summer holidays in each year.

If the placement is made after that date it can be applied for through your SSW. This allowance is to contribute to holiday costs either for days out or holidays away. This will not normally be paid if carers have taken a family holiday and not taken the child who has spent the time with respite carers.

If you know the child will not be with you for the full duration of the summer holidays, please contact your Supervising Social Worker who will complete the necessary tasks to ensure the pro-rata payment is made and that any overpayment is prevented.

## 2.3 **Pocket Money** (included in the weekly allowances as shown below).

Children should be advised of the amount of pocket money they will receive and this will vary according to age.

Pocket money is for incidental expenses above and beyond normal household items. Dependent on age this could be sweets, make-up, toys, computer games and purchase of gifts for family and friends. It is also expected that children aged 11 and over will contribute towards expensive hobbies and clubs. Any money not given directly to the child should be placed in a savings account.

Guidance for recommended pocket money rates (payable from allowance):

Age Range	Amount
0 – 1	-
2 – 4	£3.00
5 – 10	£4.00
11 – 12	£6.00
13 – 15	£9.00
16+	£15.00

## 2.4 **Clothing**

As a carer you are expected to be able to care for and provide for the foster child within the allowance: it is not expected that every week you spend a fixed amount on clothes, as long as the child is appropriately and adequately clothed. **You must keep**

**a record and receipts for clothing purchases** for six months after the end of the placement. If the social worker or supervising social worker is concerned about the child's clothing, they will discuss this with you and may ask to see a record of purchases and receipts. For any child who comes into care with inadequate clothing, a discretionary grant of up to £100 will be provided to purchase essential clothing items. This should be agreed with the SSW.

**Please note that when a child leaves your home, clothing and belongings must be packed in holdalls. Plastic sacks/carrier bags must not be used in any circumstances. If necessary please purchase holdalls and claim the money back.**

## **2.5 School Uniform**

A uniform grant will be payable when a child changes school and the school requires him / her to have a set uniform.

- a) Up to £100 will be paid for infants and junior schools.
- b) Up to £250 will be paid for secondary schools.
- c) Up to £250 will be paid for sixth form / college.

These amounts cover all school clothes including that required for sports & technology lessons.

Receipts should be kept and all clothes bought with the grant must be new and recorded.

Normal replacement of school clothes is included in the weekly allowance.

## **2.6 Specialist Items of Clothing**

- a) Uniforms for clubs e.g. Brownies, Cubs, Cadets, Judo etc will be reimbursed upon receipt up to a maximum of **£50**.
- b) For school leavers a grant of up to **£120** will be paid to contribute to the cost of work clothes or interview clothes.
- c) Other specialist equipment or clothing will be paid upon production of receipts up to a maximum of **£50**. This will only be paid once in any 12 month period and should cover equipment for hobbies such as gymnastics, football, ballet, horse riding, etc.

## **2.7 Trips Organised by Schools / Exceptional Holiday Grants**

A grant towards the cost of one exceptional holiday or one educational holiday may be payable. Payments cover the cost of the trip up to a maximum of **£300** per child. As this is an additional payment for an exceptional holiday, it is unlikely to be paid in successive years. This must be agreed by the Fostering Team Manager

## **2.8 Family Time**

Foster carers are often best placed to help a child manage time with their family. The allowance includes an element of costs incurred related to family time which may

take place in your own home. There may be family time with birth relatives up to three times a week.

Family time will not normally take place in your home after 7pm in the evening or at weekends. However if the care plan requires family time to take place in the home after 7pm or at weekends and is not at the foster carer's convenience, a disruption rate of **£2.50** per hour will be paid. *This will need to be logged and confirmed with your Child's SW and SSW at the time of placement.* If you are responsible for taking children to family time away from your home and it is not practicable to return home during family time, a disruption / expenses rate of **£4.00** per hour will be paid. This figure will include all parking costs, food purchased and other incidental items.

## **2.9 Meetings**

Being a foster carer will involve you attending a variety of meetings such as statutory looked after reviews to review and consider the child's care plan, medicals for the child, planning meetings, child protection conferences, specialist input (education, psychologist, medical) etc relating to the child and mileage is payable for these meetings.

## **2.10 Transport**

For mileage agreed by the Directorate, foster carers will be reimbursed at the rate of 45p per mile. In line with HMRC rules, mileage after 10,000 miles will be paid at 25p. **Claims for agreed mileage must be submitted on a monthly basis. To comply with accounting requirements claims for mileage and expenses need to be submitted every month by the 4<sup>th</sup> of the following month. Any mileage to be paid in excess of a three month period is at the discretion of the Fostering Team Manager.**

### **People Carriers**

The Directorate has, in a small number of exceptional cases, provided on loan a people carrier for a short period. Requests will be considered on an individual basis and agreed by the Fostering Team Manager. There is also a small capital budget, which may enable a contribution towards the purchase of a people carrier for foster carers able to look after larger sibling groups.

## **2.11 Telephone Costs**

It is anticipated that costs arising from helping the child keep in touch with their family will be met through the normal allowance payments, as will reasonable top up / contract payments for mobile phones.

## **2.12 Laundry Costs**

A child may occasionally wet the bed and laundry costs arising from this are included in the allowance. However if you are caring for a large group of siblings (3 or more) additional support will be available. This should be discussed with your Supervising Social Worker as should any specific examples where additional costs are incurred.

### **2.13 Hospitality during Introductions**

Where a foster carer provides hospitality for a family during adoption introductions they can claim for this at a rate of £5 per person per day.

### **2.14 Out of Hours Payments**

Mainstream foster carers will be paid £80 if they are approached by the Emergency Duty Team to take a placement out of normal office hours and agree to the placement. In recognition of the disruption and preparation that may have taken place, this payment will be made regardless of whether the child is actually placed. However, it will not be paid if carers decline the placement and it is not payable to carers specifically recruited for the emergency scheme.

### **2.15 Playgroup / Nursery Fees**

Decisions with regard to pre-school attendance will be made at the placement planning meeting or subsequent reviews. Children in care are entitled to receive free pre-school placements after their 2nd birthdays. This will require discussion with the education provider.

Playgroup fees will be paid up to a maximum of £25 per week providing they are agreed as being required as part of the child's care plan. Meals provided at nursery should be funded from the weekly fostering allowance.

### **2.16 After school activities**

The first activity should be funded for from the weekly fostering allowance. For additional activities the fostering service will fund up to £25 per week for one additional activity that has been agreed as being required as part of the child's care plan.

### **2.17 Day Care**

Occasionally carer's friends or family members who have been checked and approved will provide care for all or part of a day. In order to provide a consistent approach to this issue the following rates will be applied irrespective of whether the provider is a carer or not. These will be paid at an hourly rate based on the age appropriate fostering allowance. For any carer providing day care to a child excluded from school, a payment of £50 per day and £25 per half day (up to 4.5 hours) will be made. This additional payment is intended to be used for educational activities with the young person concerned. Details of the activities should be discussed and reviewed by the child's social worker and supervising social worker. This will be reviewed after 28 days by the Fostering Team Manager. Any care arrangement in excess of this will be considered a respite arrangement and will attract the pro rata daily rate applicable to the child.

### **2.18 Respite Care**

In line with the Support for Carers Policy all permanent foster carers will be provided with 14 nights respite per year unless the care plans recognises that additional periods are required.

For task centred carers, it is anticipated that leave can be taken between placements. However where a child's placement continues beyond the anticipated duration and extends beyond 12 months, 14 days paid respite will be available. Any respite in addition to this must be part of the child's care plan.

For all children the experience of a family holiday is recognised as valuable and respite care should be only used on a limited basis for holiday periods. It will be for carers to determine how they want to take respite either for weekends or a longer holiday period.

Where children are placed for respite with other carers, the respite carers will normally receive the usual allowance payable for that particular child, however the child's main placement allowance will continue to be paid for up to two nights only. For three nights or more the allowance for the main carers would cease unless the main placement is a permanent arrangement then the main carers will continue to receive the allowance.

There is no entitlement to "holiday pay" or carrying it forward to the next year if the respite is not used. It is essential for respite arrangements to be made formally through your SSW. Due to tax regulations under no circumstances are payments to be made directly from one carer to another.

## **2.19 Educational Support**

Lincolnshire County Council is committed to raising the educational attainment of children in care. To assist school children, particularly those at Key Stage 2 (10-11 years) and those beginning either GCSE or A Level studies etc, a grant to purchase study guides will be made available. For Key Stage 2 or any junior school aged child this will be a maximum of £20 and for children in Key Stage 4 a maximum of £50. These guides are usually cheaper when purchased via schools. Children in care will also be offered opportunities for learning via the children in care children school team.

## **2.20 Child Benefit and other Benefits**

No-one in receipt of a fostering allowance can claim Child Benefit; **to do so is an offence**. Nor can foster children be included in a claim for Family Tax Credit. However, some disabled children are entitled to have an allowance such as Disability Living Allowance (changing to Personal Independence Payments for those aged 16+).

### **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)**

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a Department of Work and Pensions benefit available to disabled children who require help with personal care and / or supervision over and above that of other children of the same age because of their illness or disability. The DLA benefit contains both a care and mobility component and is paid at different rates according to the child's needs. DLA care component is paid at a low, medium or high rate and may be payable to a disabled child from the



age of three months once the child's needs have been assessed. The Mobility Component is paid at low or high rate i.e. higher rate from aged three and lower rate from age five. Some children will receive either one or both elements.

If a child is in receipt of DLA, prior to becoming a child in care, the child's social worker should be involved in discussions with the parent concerning transfer of the DLA to the foster carer. The parent must notify the Department of Works & Pensions that the child is no longer in their care and the foster carer advised to make an application to receive it. In the same way if a child moves from one foster carer to another the foster carer must notify the DWP and any DLA money transferred to the new carer.

DLA is paid to the child not the carer. Normally if the child is under 16 the carer acts as an appointee. Otherwise the young person, providing they are capable, can have the benefits paid to them direct. There are no conditions laid down by the DWP as to how the money should be spent. It is intended that the money be used to enhance the child's life so that the child derives maximum benefit from the payment of this benefit.

Foster carers will be expected to set up a separate bank account, in the foster carer's own name, into which the DLA will be paid. The money is not intended to be saved for the child for use in later years as this could result in them being penalised. For example, if there is more than £3000 in an account when the child returns home this will affect any benefits claimed by the parents. For a child reaching 16 a sum of more than £8000 will affect their claim for universal credit and housing benefits.

The child's social worker must be involved in discussion on how the DLA can be used to improve the child's life and is responsible for monitoring the way the money is spent. Carers are not expected to produce receipts for small items of expenditure but must show how it is being used for the benefit of the child. Any expenditure over £50 will require a receipt. Scrutiny of the money process to ensure that the DLA is being spent appropriately is the responsibility of the child's social worker, supported by the supervising social worker. If there is evidence that the DLA is not being spent by the foster carer on the child it would be appropriate to make another adult the appointee.

#### **Examples of how the money could be spent:**

- Activities that are costly e.g. horse riding, after school clubs.
- Provision of an escort to enable social events to be attended.
- Extra helper for an outing or holiday.
- Taxi fares for trips out.
- Extra support such as child sitting service, using individuals who are Disclosure and Barring Service checked.
- Individual equipment such as computer, communication aids.
- Laundry service and appliances.
- Replacement clothing where there is excessive wear and tear on clothing.
- Additional heating costs.
- Additional help with personal care.
- Anything that will improve the child's life.
- Special toys to meet child's needs – which may be of therapeutic value.
- Domestic help to allow carer to spend more time with child.

**All foster carers should discuss, upon receipt of the allowance, how the money is to be spent and this must be recorded by the Supervising Social Worker.**

**Each looked after review must consider how the money has been spent to the benefit of the individual child.** Additional activities for children in receipt of DLA should not routinely be paid for from additional fostering allowances.

## **2.21 Tax Liability**

Information relating to taxation that is essential to the foster carer role is available on the HMRC website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs>.

Advice is also available from the Fostering Network.

## **2.22 Insurance**

As a carer you must have buildings and content insurance and notify your insurers of your fostering status. If this results in an increase in your premiums we will meet any additional premium. Lincolnshire County Council insurance also covers carers for loss or damage caused by a child in their care. In the event of a claim, you must first contact your insurance provider and make a claim. If they decline to satisfy the claim you must ask for this in writing. If they decline, you must complete a claims form (available from your supervising social worker) for each **individual** incident as soon as possible after it occurs. This must be accompanied by proper estimates (on headed note paper and with clear details of work to be carried out), 1 estimate for claims under £500 and 2 for those over £500 (although insurers may at times request additional information). The completed form must be signed with the estimates attached, and given to your supervising social worker who will then pass it to their team manager. The team manager will take responsibility for managing the claims process and arrange for you to be notified of progress.

The Council does not provide cover for damage to cars attributable to your fostering role. You must notify your car insurers that you are fostering and should this result in a higher premium the Directorate will meet the additional premium cost. If your insurers fail to provide cover as a result, you should seek other quotes and again, the Directorate will meet the additional premium cost.

## **2.23 Children who work**

Whilst young people are in education this should be their priority. However, when it is agreed by the child's social worker and felt appropriate, a child may have a part time job. They should be encouraged to save this money or part of it, and in most cases a bank account should be set up for them. This should be discussed with the child's social worker.

When a child is in full time employment, individual discussions should take place with the social worker and young person with regard to their financial responsibilities to the placement. For a small number of young people, the Staying Put scheme allows them to remain in their foster placement post 18. The scheme has its own financial guidelines and for all such young people individual discussions should take place with the scheme co-ordinator to determine how finances will be accessed.

## **3 OVERPAYMENTS**

Overpayments to foster carers are a source of major concern and difficulty.

If you wish to avoid overpayments you must speak to your Supervising Social Worker. Payments will cease on the day a child leaves, so the final amount may be a part week at the daily rate.

Please ensure that you check your remittance advice each week to ensure you are aware of overpayments. **Overpayments will routinely be reclaimed in full, immediately from other existing allowances or set against future payments. Where there is a delay in taking a further placement, you are expected to return the overpayment promptly by cheque made payable to Lincolnshire County Council and sent to:**

**Accounts Payable  
SERCO  
Thomas Parker House  
13-14 Silver Street  
Lincoln  
LN2 1DY**

**Or by BACS:**

**Sort Code: 20-50-39  
Account: 63509095  
Lincolnshire County Council  
GB97 BARC 2050 3963 5090 95  
BARCGB 22**

**Please also quote the name of the child it is in reference to and your vendor / supplier number.**

If a child is placed with you and you have received no payments within two weeks or you have any queries about the amount received, you should contact your Supervising Social Worker in the first instance.

## CLOTHING PURCHASE RECORD

(All clothing purchases must be recorded from the start of placement)

Date	Item	Amount £

## **Foster Care Payments with percentage for 2022/23**

The following represents an estimate of the approximate cost of caring for the child based on the Fostering Network guidance.

<b>AGE</b>	<b>FOOD</b>	<b>CLOTHING</b>	<b>TRANSPORT</b>	<b>PERSONAL*</b>	<b>HOUSEHOLD</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>0-4</b>	<b>£46.00</b>	<b>£32.80</b>	<b>£12.20</b>	<b>£14.00</b>	<b>£45.10</b>	<b>£150.10</b>
<b>5-10</b>	<b>£59.00</b>	<b>£34.00</b>	<b>£12.64</b>	<b>£19.00</b>	<b>£46.00</b>	<b>£170,64</b>
<b>11-15</b>	<b>£63.00</b>	<b>£45.00</b>	<b>£22.17</b>	<b>£29.00</b>	<b>£51.00</b>	<b>£212.17</b>
<b>16+</b>	<b>£65.00</b>	<b>£65.75</b>	<b>£24.05</b>	<b>£51.17</b>	<b>£52.00</b>	<b>£257.97</b>

The above is a guide only; it is not expected, for example that you would spend £45.00 per week, every week on clothing for a 5 to 10 year old.

In which case you might want to save some for more expensive clothing such as a winter coat, additional holiday clothing

or other expenditure, If in doubt please discuss with your SSW.

### **Personal Allowances:**

This allowance is designed to meet a variety of personal needs, as well as cover pocket money and savings.

It may be used for the older age group to cover, for instance, the cost of hair care products, phone cards or personal telephone calls. Your child/young person may wish to take up a hobby or activity such as horse riding in which case some of this could contribute to that.

For Christmas/Religious festivals, Birthday and holiday allowances please see your Foster Carer Payment Book - Page 4

Appendices 2