



## **FOSTER A FUTURE**

### **NEWCASTLE CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

#### **FOSTERING SCHEME OF FEES AND ALLOWANCES**

This Scheme of Fees and Allowances should be read in conjunction with the Foster Carer Agreement, of which it is a part.

Foster a Future is the Fostering Service of Newcastle City Council and the aim of this document is to set out a framework that covers the fees and fostering allowances provided to Newcastle City Council foster carers looking after children and young people. Build a Future is the Tier 4 fostering service which is under the umbrella of Foster a Future.

If a child is placed with a connected person under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement & Review (England) Regulations 2010, a temporary weekly fostering allowance per child will be paid. This will continue to be paid during the fostering assessment process.

Once the carer is approved as a foster carer in accordance with Regulation 27 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, they may also qualify for a fee for each child placed but they must fulfill the requirements as set out for all foster carers as detailed below.

#### **Payments consist of two elements:**

1. A weekly Fostering Allowance age related to cover the costs of caring for a looked after child and
2. A Fee, if all the requirements are met

Both the Fee and the Fostering Allowance are paid into the Foster Carer's nominated bank account each fortnight as a single sum.

The Fostering Fees and Allowances are based on the age and assessed needs of the child. In line with Fostering Network recommendations, the scheme is based on a tiered model of need:

- Tier 1 is for the majority of children placed with Foster Carers, assessed as having mainstream levels of needs.
- Tier 2 is for those children with complex needs and difficult to manage behaviours.

- Tier 3 is for those children who have been allocated a Children with Disabilities Social Worker due to their level of disability or those who have been diagnosed with severe emotional and behavioural disorders.
- Tier 4 is linked to Build a Future Carers only.
- Tier 5 is linked to Change a Future Carers only

The Build a Future scheme is for those children who:

- Have been assessed as having severe emotional and behavioural disorders *and*
- are being supported to move back to the North East from distant, external residential provision, *or*
- whose behaviour has been assessed as being too challenging to be managed as a tier 3 mainstream foster placement.

This therapeutic fostering scheme aims to build resilience and reduce the chance of future placement breakdowns.

The Change a Future Scheme is for those children who:

- Those discharged from Secure Accommodation Units
- Those returning from external residential placement
- High risk young people
- Young women requiring complex mother and baby placements
- Those discharged from Specialist Units such as Ferndene Hospital
- Complex Disability cases

This therapeutic fostering scheme aims to build resilience and reduce the chance of future placement breakdowns.

When a child is initially referred to the Placements Team of Foster a Future, they will be assigned to Tier 1 of the scheme. Any requests for updates of the Tiers, must be agreed by the Service Manager for Corporate Parenting who will make a decision based on the Social Worker's and Care Team's assessment of the child's needs. Children's needs change as they grow and develop, and for this this reason, all tier agreements will be kept under regular review.

### **Weekly Fostering (boarded out) Allowance:**

This is provided to cover the needs of a child or young person placed in the fostering household and covers all food and associated utility costs, transport, recreational costs and any additional costs attributing to improving outcomes for children in care.

### **The Fee:**

Fees are paid by the fostering service in addition to the fostering allowance to reflect the expertise and the nature of tasks undertaken by a range of foster carers. Whilst the boarded out allowance is paid to all foster carers who are approved and are providing placements for children, payment of the fee is dependent on evidence being provided of the foster carers' continuous professional development as described below:

## **Foster Carer Training:**

Approved carers who have completed their pre-approval training and have a child placed will be eligible for the fostering fee and will remain eligible so long as they complete the all aspects of Training, Support & Development (TSD) standards within 12 months of their approval or 18 months if they are a connected person. The TSD standards are a national minimum benchmark used by Ofsted and completion of the standards requires the completion of workbook evidence.

Training will be provided by the fostering service and may take the form of group training or individual bespoke training with the supervising social worker or fostering training officer.

Continuous professional development is a requirement for all foster carers post approval and joint carers will both be expected to complete the required training. Carers training records will be reviewed annually as part of the independent review process and non-compliance with training requirements will result in the fee not being paid the following year.

It is vitally important that foster carers continue to develop their knowledge and be able to reflect on what they have learned to help them meet a child's physical, emotional and social needs. The type of training that carers will be required to complete per year will be identified, organised and reviewed by their supervising social worker.

The fostering service works in partnership with foster carers to improve services inclusive of training programs. We strongly value the feedback we receive as part of the consultation events, working groups and Foster Talk-ins that take place throughout the year. We strongly recommend attendance at these events.

## **Recording & Supervision:**

All foster carers will be provided with a supervising social worker who will visit on a regular basis 4-6 weekly. During periods of need they will arrange to visit more regularly and as needed. In addition, up to two unannounced visits per year will be completed by a supervising social worker within the fostering team.

The National Minimum Standards require that all foster carers maintain diary records for the child/ren in their care. The necessary recording sheets will be provided by the fostering service. These recordings will be reviewed upon every visit and copies will be retained by the fostering service and uploaded onto the child's file. Training and support will be provided by the fostering service on the protocol for keeping records and how to keep these records, photos and other information safe and secure.

## 1. Table of the Fees and Fostering Allowances (payable from August 2018)

### Tier 1

Age Band	Fostering Allowance Per Child Per Week	Fee Per Child Per Week	Total Per Child per Week	Daily Foster Care Payment	Full Day Respite Care	Half Day Respite Care
0-4	£140.33	£104.56	<b>£244.89</b>	£34.98	£23.32	£17.49
5-10	£159.85	£156.84	<b>£316.69</b>	£45.24	£30.16	£22.62
11-15	£204.75	£156.84	<b>£361.59</b>	£51.66	£34.44	£25.83
16+	£242.08	£156.84	<b>£398.92</b>	£56.99	£37.99	£28.49

### Tier 2

Age Band	Fostering Allowance Per Child Per Week	Fee Per Child Per Week	Total Per Child per Week	Daily Foster Care Payment	Full Day Respite Care	Half Day Respite Care
0-4	£140.33	£156.84	<b>£297.17</b>	£42.45	£28.30	£21.23
5-10	£159.85	£209.12	<b>£368.97</b>	£52.71	£35.14	£26.36
11-15	£204.75	£209.12	<b>£413.87</b>	£59.12	£39.42	£29.56
16+	£242.08	£209.12	<b>£451.20</b>	£64.46	£42.97	£32.23

### Tier 3

Age Band	Fostering Allowance Per Child Per Week	Fee Per Child Per Week	Total Per Child per Week	Daily Foster Care Payment	Full Day Respite Care	Half Day Respite Care
0-4	£140.33	£199.98	<b>£340.31</b>	£48.62	£32.41	£24.31
5-10	£159.85	£262.23	<b>£422.08</b>	£60.30	£40.20	£30.15
11-15	£204.75	£270.47	<b>£475.22</b>	£67.89	£45.26	£33.94
16+	£242.08	£270.47	<b>£512.55</b>	£73.22	£48.81	£36.61

### Tier 4 – Build a Future Service & Parent/Child Placements

The total weekly payment for this service is the same regardless of age.

Age Band	Fostering Allowance Per Child Per Week	Fee Per Child Per Week	Total Per Child per Week
5-10	£159.85	£590.15	<b>£750</b>
11-15	£204.75	£545.25	<b>£750</b>
16+	£242.08	£507.92	<b>£750</b>

## Tier 5 - Change a Future Service

The total weekly payment for this service is the same regardless of age.

Age Band	Fostering Allowance Per Child Per Week	Fee Per Child Per Week	Total Per Child per Week	Retainer Payment
5-10	£159.85	£840.15	<b>£1000</b>	<b>£350</b>
11-15	£204.75	£795.25	<b>£1000</b>	<b>£350</b>
16+	£242.08	£757.92	<b>£1000</b>	<b>£350</b>

## 2. Table of Fostering Allowance - Percentage Spends

To help Foster Carers with their budgeting, the table below provides guidance on the percentage spent from the Fostering Allowance each week on the needs of the child based on age.

It is recommended that the child should receive approximately half the amount of spends suggested in the 'Personal' column as **Pocket Money** each week. This may not always be appropriate to the child's needs and the actual sum should be agreed by the child's Social Worker, Foster Carer and Supervising Social Worker on placement and written down in the Placement Plan.

The following figures are to be used as a general guide:

Age	Food	Clothing	Transport	Personal	Household	Total
0-4	34% (£47.70)	22% (£30.88)	8% (£11.23)	6% (£8.42)	30% (£42.10)	<b>100%</b> <b>(£140.33)</b>
5-10	32% (£51.14)	26% (£41.57)	7% (£11.19)	8% (£12.79)	27% (£43.16)	<b>100%</b> <b>(£159.85)</b>
11-15	32% (£65.50)	26% (£53.24)	11% (£22.53)	10% (£20.48)	21% (£43.00)	<b>100%</b> <b>(£204.75)</b>
16+	30% (£72.63)	28% (£67.77)	13% (£31.47)	12% (£29.05)	17% (£41.16)	<b>100%</b> <b>(£242.08)</b>

## Respite Care

An additional 4 weeks Fee and Fostering Allowance has been included in the total figures given in the table of payments for Tier 1 and Tier 2. This sum of money is given to the Foster Carer so that they can purchase respite care from Foster a Future either for the child, if this is included in the care plan, or for them. For each day the child is away from their care, a percentage of the Fee and Fostering Allowance will be deducted. This deduction will fund payment to the respite carer where appropriate. If a child has respite with the identified support carer, a deduction will not be made from the main carer. However, if the child goes to an approved respite carer, then a deduction will be made. If respite is required to support placement stability, only the Fostering Team Manager can agree to this request and on

agreement there will be no deduction from the main carer so in these circumstances both the main carer and respite carer will be paid, and this will be regularly reviewed in line with the child's needs.

Those Foster Carers who choose not to take respite or who have placements with no identified plans for respite will not have any payments deducted.

If a Foster Carer requires respite day care for a child in their care to allow them to attend a training course at the request of Foster a Future, or to attend a meeting in relation to the child, no deduction will be made from the main carer following the agreement of the Fostering Team Manager. However, if the request is made by the carer for a non-supportive reason, this can only be granted by the Fostering Team Manager. The Placements Team must be informed of the reason the day care is required when the request is made so they can make the relevant decision around any potential deductions.

Tier 3 attracts 12 weeks additional Fee and Fostering Allowance which is within the payments.

Tier 4 (Build a Future) attracts an additional fee for the duration of the young person's placement within the Build a Future dedicated service and includes the Fostering Allowance given in Tier 3. TIER 4 payments will also be the fee paid for Mother/Child Placements.

### **Respite Day Care Rates**

Respite full-day care rates are calculated as two thirds of the Fostering rate on a daily basis at each Tier and Age Band level.

Respite half-day rates are calculated as half the full-day rate at each Tier and Age Band level.

### **Community Fostering and Short Break Day Care**

The Community Fostering and Short Break Day Care fee is £34.16 per session (1 session equates to up to 4 hours of care).

### **Short Breaks (Shared Care) Over Night Rates**

<b>Age Band</b>	<b>Per Week</b>
0-4	£322.50
5-10	£400.47
11-18	£464.73

Short Break overnight stay payments are based on fractional/pro-rata of the above weekly rates.

### **Out of Hours Foster Carer Support Service**

Out of hours (after 5pm and before 9am) weekday support allowance rate is £23.91. The 24 hour Saturday, Sunday and bank holiday rate is £36.78.

### **Staying Put**

Carers who care for a young adult under a staying put arrangement will receive a rate of £156.06 per week to cover the time and expenses related to caring for the young person. If

the young adult is living away from the placement during term time due to studying at a higher educational level, a remuneration package of £84.27 per week will be paid.

### **Staying Put Arrangements for young people with disabilities:**

For Staying Put arrangements involving young people with a disability of meet the criteria for the Shared Lives Scheme, the payment to the foster carer will be £400 per week. This keeps the payments in line with the payments made to carers under the Shared Lives Scheme in Adult Services. This payment is currently paid to the carer by the fostering service and reclaimed from Adult Services.

The young person in placement will be expected to claim full benefits including housing benefit.

In line with arrangements in Adults Services, the young person will be expected to contribute £112.90 per week towards the placement and will be assessed on further contribution of between £11 and £20 per week.

### **Supported Lodgings**

Supported Lodgings carers received an allowance of £156.06 per week to cover the time and expenses related to caring for the young person.

### **Christmas, Birthday and Holiday Allowances for the Child**

An additional payment equal to *4 weeks of the Fostering Fee* has been included within the Annual Fee total sum, so that the Foster Carer can spend money to the equivalent value on the child on these occasions.

A child may not always be in placement with a carer for a whole year, or having had a birthday, for example, may leave placement soon afterwards and another child come into placement who also has a close birthday. These situations are rare and Foster Carers are expected to provide for a child on these occasions from their Fee; additional payments will not be made to the carer.

### **Additional Payments**

There are no other additional payments in fees or allowances of any kind except for the 'start-up' package available to Foster Carers who have babies placed with them, and for car mileage in certain circumstances.

### **Start-up Package for Baby Placements**

In preparation for the first baby (0 – 24 months) placement, the Supervising Social Worker will discuss with the carer what essential equipment is needed to facilitate the placement. Remuneration for essential items will be made (but only once) and receipts should be provided for audit purposes. For each subsequent placement the Foster Carer is responsible for replacing these items as necessary. However, cot mattresses must be replaced with each new placement, and the Foster Carer may claim £50.00 towards this cost each time the mattress is replaced. Receipts must be kept and presented to Foster a Future when claiming for the cost of a new mattress. The purchase cost of each essential item should be

agreed with the supervising social worker and should be reasonable. The maximum amounts that can be claimed back for each item are as follow:

Combination Buggy	£300.00
Moses Basket	£60.00
Cot	£170.00
Monitor	£40.00
Steriliser	£40.00
Mat	£10.00
Bath	£10.00
Fireguard	£25.00
Cradle	£25.00
Bedding	£40.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£720.00 (max)</b>

### **Car Mileage Allowance**

It is the responsibility of the Foster Carer to transport the child to and from school, to and from arranged activities outside of school, and to and from contact, unless otherwise agreed by their Supervising Social Worker and recorded in the Placement Plan at the outset of the placement.

Transport costs have been factored into the Fee and Fostering Allowance Payments as seen in Table 2 above, but for Foster Carers using their own cars to provide transportation to school and for contact/medical appointments as per their care plan, an additional allowance of 31.7p per mile is payable. Activities that are part of normal family living i.e. trips out are not payable through the additional allowance.

### **Requests for emergency clothing allowance (up to £50 maximum)**

This money is a loan and will be deducted from the allowance payment for that named child/children.

An emergency clothing allowance is payable only in the following circumstances:

- A child is admitted into the Looked after Service directly into a foster placement and has no suitable clothing.
- A child is admitted into the Looked after Service directly into a foster placement and all the clothing provided is the wrong size.
- A child is moved to a Foster Carer in the above circumstances after less than two weeks with a different carer/relative and no allowance has been paid in respect of the child.

An emergency clothing allowance is not payable if the child moves to a foster carer from another foster placement after a fortnight and the carer feels the clothing is unsuitable or the wrong size – this is not appropriate as a fostering allowance will already have been paid in respect of the child.

An emergency clothing allowance is not payable if provision has been made to a different carer or family member to allow clothing to be purchased.

The Social Worker must make every effort to retrieve clothing from a child's parent/s following placement and before an emergency payment request is made.



## Planning Holidays and Leave of Absence during Term-time

Family holidays which include the foster child must be taken during school and college holidays. Foster Carers should not plan holidays (including day-trips) during term time.

The Education Regulations 2006 have been amended so that from 1st September 2013, Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers will now determine the number of days that a child can be away from the school if the leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is granted.

Foster carers can therefore request permission to remove a child in their care from the school *if there are extenuating or compassionate reasons*. This request is not an automatic right and the school/college will take into account the reasons for the request, the child's attendance, progress, resilience and well-being before making a decision. The request must be made in writing by the foster carer to the Head and agreed by the child's Social Worker beforehand.

**Tax Requirements: All foster carers should be registered as self-employed. For advice and information Newcastle fostering service provides through agreement with HMRC, a tax widget that can be found on the NCC website. All questions relating to tax can be addressed through this service.**

