



FOSTER A FUTURE

NEWCASTLE CHILDREN'S SERVICES

FOSTERING SCHEME OF FEES AND ALLOWANCES as revised 4.4.22

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 fostering allowances and fees (sometimes referred to as the remuneration element) provided to Newcastle City Council foster carers looking after children and young people. Build a Future and Change a Future are specialist fostering services which sit 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.

Foster Care Payments

The foster care payment consists of two elements:

1. A weekly fostering age related allowance, sometimes referred to as the boarded-out allowance, which covers the day to day costs of caring for a child in care
2. A tier payment – this is the fee or remuneration element of the payment.

Fostering (boarded out) Allowance

This allowance 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, clothing, transport, holidays and outings and any additional costs attributed to improving outcomes for children in care.

Tier payments

Tier payments 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, the payment of the tier element is dependent on the foster carers' skill set and their ability to meet a particular child's needs, their commitment to their continuous professional development and their ability to meet fostering standards which includes the following tasks:

- keeping diary recordings for the children in their care*
- attending care team meetings and medical appointments for the child
- Being available for supervision visits and the child's statutory visits
- Working with the service and other professionals with regards the plan for the child
- undertaking all mandatory and recommended training and to be committed to continuous development*
- Completing the Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards within 12 months (or 18 months for connected carers)*
- following any advice provided to them by the medical advisor or the Fostering Service as a condition of their continued approval as foster carers

*Please also see Foster Carer Training and Recording and Supervision sections below.

Tier 1 relates to most children placed with Foster Carers, assessed as having mainstream levels of needs.

All tier payments above tier 1 will only be considered if the carer has demonstrated the skills required to meet the needs of a particular child as specified below:

- Tier 2 is aligned to the skill set needed to care for a child with complex needs and difficult to manage behaviours.
- Tier 3 is aligned to the skill set needed to care for a child who has been allocated a Children with Disabilities Social Worker due to their level of disability or who is displaying or has been diagnosed with severe emotional and behavioural disorders.

Tiers 4 and 5 are specialist fostering schemes and carers need to possess a particular skill set to be part of these schemes.

The tier 4 Build a Future scheme is aligned to the skill set needed to care for:

- A child who has been assessed as having severe emotional and behavioural disorders who is being supported to move back to the Northeast from distant, external residential provision, *or*

- A child whose behaviour has been assessed as being too challenging and complex to be managed as a tier 3 mainstream foster placement.
- Parent and Child foster placements

The tier 5 Change a Future Scheme is aligned to the skill set needed to care for:

- A child who is currently resident in Secure Accommodation Units or specialist units such as Fern Dene Hospital and could be considered for discharge into a foster placement
- A child who has been assessed as 'high risk' and who requires a specialist therapeutic foster placement
- Young parents requiring complex parent and child placements
- A child who has complex and multiple disabilities whose care demands are such that they could not be cared for within a tier 3 or 4 foster placement

When a child is initially referred to the Placements Team of Foster a Future, they will be assigned to the tier 1 scheme (unless by prior agreement of the Service Manager).

Any request for a review of the tier that the carer is paid must first be considered by the Service Manager for Corporate Parenting who will make the decision re the appropriate tier based on the SSW's assessment of the skills of the carer to meet that specific child's needs. The SSW assessment report should take account of the child's assessed needs and should include the views of child's Social Worker and key members of the Care Team. This report must contain the views and recommendations of the Fostering Team Manager.

All tier agreements will be kept under regular review to ensure the above criteria continues to be met for each case.

Both the fostering allowance and tier payments are paid into the Foster Carer's nominated bank account each fortnight as a single sum.

Foster Carer Training

Foster Carers who have completed their pre-approval training and have a child placed will be eligible for a tier payment and will remain eligible so long as they meet fostering standards and complete all aspects of the 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 foster carers must complete the TSD workbook as evidence of TSD completion.

In addition to the TSDs, mandatory and other specialist or optional training will be provided by the fostering service and may take the form of online training, in person group training or individual bespoke training with the Supervising Social Worker (SSW) or Foster Carer Training Coordinator.

Continuous professional development is a requirement for all foster carers post approval and where there is more than one approved carer in a household, both carers must complete the required training in order to qualify for the tier payment. Carers training records will be reviewed annually as part of the their Foster Carer Review (FCR) and non-compliance with training or other requirements could, in exceptional circumstances, result in the tier payment not being suspended.

It is vitally important that foster carers continue to develop their knowledge and can reflect on what they have learned to help them meet a child’s physical, emotional, educational and social needs. The type of training that carers will be required to complete will be identified, organised and reviewed by their SSW. Every approved foster carer should have a Professional Personal Development Plan (PPDP) which is a working document that outlines carers training and development. The PPDP will need to be completed with support from the carer’s SSW and should be reviewed as part of the FCR process.

The fostering service works in partnership with foster carers to improve all its services including the training programs. We strongly value the feedback we receive as part of consultation events, participation groups and Foster Talk-ins that take place throughout the year.

Recording and Supervision

All foster carers will be provided with an SSW who will visit on a regular basis 4-6 weekly. Where there is a need, home visits should be arranged more regularly. In addition, at least one unannounced visit per year should be completed by a SSW within the fostering team.

The National Minimum Standards require that all foster carers maintain diary records for the children in their care. The appropriate recording format will be provided by the fostering service. These recordings will be reviewed upon every visit by the SSW 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 maintaining records and how to keep these records, photos and other confidential or sensitive information safe and secure.

Table of the Fees and Fostering Allowances

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	£106.65	£246.98	£35.28	£23.52	£17.64
5-10	£159.85	£159.98	£319.83	£45.69	£30.46	£22.84

11-15	£204.75	£159.98	£364.73	£52.10	£34.74	£26.05
16+	£242.08	£159.98	£402.06	£57.44	£38.29	£28.72

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	£159.98	£300.32	£42.90	£28.60	£21.45
5-10	£159.85	£213.30	£373.15	£53.31	£35.54	£26.65
11-15	£204.75	£213.30	£418.05	£59.72	£39.81	£29.86
16+	£242.08	£213.30	£455.38	£65.05	£43.37	£32.53

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	£203.98	£344.31	£49.19	£32.79	£24.59
5-10	£159.85	£267.47	£427.32	£61.05	£40.70	£30.52
11-15	£204.75	£275.88	£480.63	£68.66	£45.77	£34.33
16+	£242.08	£275.88	£517.96	£73.99	£49.33	£37.00

Specialist Schemes

As tier 4 and 5 schemes have payments attached to them that are significantly higher than the standard tier 1 payments, a flat rate has been agreed which will cover all age groups and incorporate both the allowance and the tier enhancement elements as follows:

Tier 4 – Build a Future scheme and Parent and Child placements

Age Band	Fostering Allowance and Fee per Child per Week	Daily Foster Care Payment	Full Day Respite Care	Half Day Respite Care
NA	£760	108.57	72.38	36.19

Tier 5 - Change a Future Scheme and Parent and Child Placements which have been assessed as more complex

Age Band	Fostering Allowance and Fee per Child per Week	Daily Foster Care Payment	Daily Respite Care	Half Day Respite	Retainer Payment
NA	£1015	£145.00	£96.67	£48.33	£ 350

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 SSW 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)	100% (£140.33)
5-10	32% (£51.14)	26% (£41.57)	7% (£11.19)	8% (£12.79)	27% (£43.16)	100% (£159.85)
11-15	32% (£65.50)	26% (£53.24)	11% (£22.53)	10% (£20.48)	21% (£43.00)	100% (£204.75)
16+	30% (£72.63)	28% (£67.77)	13% (£31.47)	12% (£29.05)	17% (£41.16)	100% (£242.08)

Respite Care

An additional 4 weeks fostering allowance and fee have been included in the total figures given in the table of payments for Tier 1 and 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 support respite to stop a placement either disrupting or coming to an end 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 to the finance paid to the carers.

Tier 3 attracts 12 weeks additional fostering allowance and fee which is within the payments.

Tier 4 and 5 schemes attracts an additional fee for the duration of the child's placement and includes the additional fostering allowance that has been provided for tier 3 payments.

Respite Day Care Rates

Respite full-day care rates are calculated as two thirds of the Fostering daily rate 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 £38.00 per session (1 session equates to up to 4 hours of care).

Short Breaks (Shared Care) Over Night Rates

Age Band	Per Week
0-4	£328.95
5-10	£408.48
11-18	£474.02

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 £24.39. The 24-hour Saturday, Sunday and bank holiday rate is £37.52.

Staying Put

Carers who care for a young adult under a staying put arrangement will receive a rate of £159.18 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 £85.96 per week will be paid.

Staying Put Arrangements for young people with disabilities

For Staying Put arrangements involving young people with a disability who meet the criteria for the Shared Lives Scheme, the payment to the foster carer will be in line with 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 towards the placement. Further information on this scheme is available from the services designated Supported Lodgings and Staying Put Worker.

Supported Lodgings

Supported Lodgings carers received an allowance of £159.18 per week to cover the time and expenses related to caring for the young person.

Birthday, Religious and other 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 payments; 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 SSW 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 SSW and should be reasonable. The maximum amounts that can be claimed back for each item are as follow:

Combination Buggy	£400.00
Moses Basket	£60.00
Cot	£170.00
Monitor	£40.00
Steriliser	£50.00
Bottles	£15.00
Mat	£10.00
Bath	£15.00

Fireguard	£30.00
Safety gate	£30.00
Cot Mattress and Bedding	£70.00
Baby Bouncer	£20.00
Total	£910.00 (max)

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 'Family Time', unless otherwise agreed by their SSW and recorded in the Placement Plan at the outset of the placement.

Transport costs have been factored into the fostering 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 the child's care plan, an additional allowance of 45p per mile is payable for Petrol or Diesel cars. Activities that are part of normal family living i.e., trips out should be paid for out of the foster carer's payment.

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 care and goes directly into a foster placement and has no suitable clothing.
- A child is admitted into care and goes 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 daytrips) during term time.

Head Teachers 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 consider 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.

Payments to Foster Carers subject to an allegation

In the event of an allegation or serious complaint being made against a Foster Carer or their household requiring the removal of children they will continue to be paid the fee (tier element) for the child, but not the allowance, for a maximum period of **12 weeks** or until the allegation and investigation process is concluded, whichever is sooner.

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.

