

## INFORMATION FOR FOSTER CARERS

### Payment for skills scheme for foster carers

The following payments are with effect from 1st April 2013

#### LEVELS OF PAYMENT

Payments are made up from 2 elements, the first being a payment to the carer to cover the cost of caring for a child. This first element is based on the weekly national minimum fostering allowance and it is what the government calculates the cost of a child in care to be. The second element is a payment to the carers in recognition of the skills that a carer has and the training that they have attended. As carers gain skills and experience they are able to progress to higher bands and receive a higher skills payment.

All placements made under regulation 24 are paid at Band 1 until carers have been fully approved and have completed the required training.

#### Band 1

| <u>Age (years)</u> | <u>Basic Allowance &amp; Total</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 0 – 1              | £116.00                            |
| 2 – 3              | £119.00                            |
| 4 – 7              | £132.00                            |
| 8 – 10             | £132.00                            |
| 11 – 12            | £151.00                            |
| 13 – 15            | £151.00                            |
| 16 – 17            | £175.00                            |

#### Band 2

| <u>Age (years)</u> | <u>Basic Allowance</u> | <u>Skills Payment</u> | <u>TOTAL</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 0 – 1              | £116.00                | £ 25.38               | £141.40      |
| 2 – 3              | £119.00                | £ 23.08               | £142.10      |
| 4 – 7              | £132.00                | £ 25.14               | £157.20      |
| 8 – 10             | £132.00                | £ 50.27               | £182.30      |
| 11 – 12            | £151.00                | £ 83.65               | £234.70      |
| 13 – 15            | £151.00                | £134.85               | £285.90      |
| 16 – 17            | £175.00                | £144.33               | £319.40      |

#### Band 3

| <u>Age (years)</u> | <u>Basic Allowance</u> | <u>Skills Payment</u> | <u>TOTAL</u><br>(to nearest 10p) |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 0 – 1              | £116.00                | £ 32.55               | £148.60                          |
| 2 – 3              | £119.00                | £ 30.08               | £149.10                          |
| 4 – 7              | £132.00                | £ 32.88               | £164.90                          |
| 8 – 10             | £132.00                | £ 59.27               | £191.30                          |
| 11 – 12            | £151.00                | £ 95.30               | £246.30                          |
| 13 – 15            | £151.00                | £149.06               | £300.10                          |
| 16 – 17            | £175.00                | £160.19               | £335.20                          |

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#### **Band 4**

| <u>Age (years)</u> | <u>Basic Allowance</u> | <u>Skills Payment</u> | <u>TOTAL</u><br>(to nearest 10p) |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 0 – 1              | £116.00                | £ 39.69               | £155.70                          |
| 2 – 3              | £119.00                | £ 37.12               | £156.20                          |
| 4 – 7              | £132.00                | £ 40.63               | £172.70                          |
| 8 – 10             | £132.00                | £ 67.27               | £199.27                          |
| 11 – 12            | £151.00                | £107.03               | £258.10                          |
| 13 – 15            | £151.00                | £163.28               | £314.30                          |
| 16 – 17            | £175.00                | £176.07               | £351.10                          |

#### **Band 5**

| <u>Age (years)</u> | <u>Basic Allowance</u> | <u>Skills Payment</u> | <u>TOTAL</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 0 – 1              | £116.00                | £ 46.32               | £162.40      |
| 2 – 3              | £119.00                | £ 43.68               | £162.70      |
| 4 – 7              | £132.00                | £ 48.37               | £180.40      |
| 8 – 10             | £132.00                | £ 76.33               | £208.40      |
| 11 – 12            | £151.00                | £116.85               | £267.90      |
| 13 – 15            | £151.00                | £177.49               | £328.50      |
| 16 – 17            | £175.00                | £191.82               | £366.90      |

#### **Training and Skill requirements**

In order for carers to progress through the bands, carers must meet the requirements set out below. Except for carers progressing from Band 1 to Band 2, other carers will only progress on the successful completion of an annual review and with the agreement of the Agency Decision Maker. The training requirements and expectations are set out in the training strategy and should be discussed during the carer's supervision with their supervising social worker.

Carers who do not maintain the training required for their current level will receive a written notification and a 6 month time frame in which to address any gaps in their training. Those carers who do not complete the required training will drop down to the previous level.

#### **Band 1**

Basic payments will be paid to foster carers who are only approved temporarily under Regulation 24 of the care planning legislation 2010. Carers will continue to receive Band 1 payments until they have completed the initial training course.

- Fully approved family and friends carers approved to look after a specific child, can choose to remain on Band 1 if they do not wish to meet the criteria for the higher Bands.

## **Band 2**

### **Band 2 includes:**

- Newly approved foster carers.
- Family & Friends carers must have attended and successfully completed the initial training course for Family and Friends carers to progress to this band.
- All carers should also complete daily recording sheets, attend first aid training and safer caring and work towards completing the CWDC Induction Standards.

### **Minimum skills required for all those approved as foster carers for Trafford Fostering Service**

#### **General:**

- An ability to provide a good standard of care to other people's children which promotes healthy, emotional, physical and sexual development as well as their health and educational achievement.
- An ability to work closely with children's families, and others who are important to the child, in a non-judgemental way.
- An ability to set appropriate boundaries, and manage children's behaviour within these, without the use of physical or inappropriate punishment.
- Knowledge of normal child development and an ability to listen and communicate with children appropriate to their age and understanding.

#### **Providing a safe and caring environment:**

- An ability to ensure that the children are cared for in a home where they are safe from harm or abuse.
- An ability to help children keep themselves safe from harm or abuse, and to know how to seek help if their safety is threatened.

#### **Working as part of a team:**

- An ability to work with other professional people and contribute to the department's planning for the child/young person.
- An ability to communicate effectively.
- An ability to keep information confidential.
- An ability to promote equality, diversity and the rights of individuals and groups within society.

#### **Own development:**

- An ability to appreciate how personal experiences have affected themselves and their families, and the impact that fostering is likely to have on them all.
- An ability to have people and links within the community, which provide support.
- An ability to use training opportunities and to improve skills.
- An ability to sustain positive relationships and maintain effective functioning through periods of stress.

### **Band 3**

#### **Band 3 includes:**

Foster carers who meet all the relevant criteria for Band 2 and who, in addition, have:

- A minimum of one years experience of fostering and have had their first Review positively appraised by the Fostering Panel and agreed by the agency decision-maker.
- Attended a minimum of 50% of support group meetings or can demonstrate that they regularly access equivalent support from other sources (such as networking with other foster carers, or use of Fostering Network resources).
- Successfully completed the following core training:
  - 1) At least one carer in each household must complete training in CWDC Induction Standards, First Aid, Introduction to Child Protection, Safer Care and recording training
  - 2) Where two partners foster as a couple, one carer in the household must have completed all this core training and the other must have completed First Aid and Safer Care training as a minimum. The above training must be refreshed every five years (three for first aid). All carers in the household must also have undertaken any training specified at the point of approval or subsequently through supervision, performance appraisal or annual review which is identified as necessary by the supervising social worker.
- Completed the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Standards for Foster Carer Training, Support and Development – this applies to all approved carers within a household. (For couples, the completion of a single workbook for the household is permissible)
- Maintained a daily record when children have been in placement.
- Contributed written reports for child's review and attended child review meetings.
- Attended school meetings for the child, including Personal Education Plan meetings (if applicable).
- Produced a book about their household to introduce themselves to children. The exception to this is if the carer already has long-term placements, in which case they must be committed to producing a book about their household as soon as they become available to take new placements.

#### **Foster carers must also provide evidence of the following key skills:**

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- An ability to help children develop appropriate social behaviour, helping them to become more independent, and enabling them to cope with their emotions as appropriate to their age and ability.
- An ability to assist children in developing basic aspects of memory, thinking, imagination and manipulative skills through play etc.
- An ability to help children develop their language skills and general self-expression.
- An ability to help children learn the boundaries of acceptable behaviour without resorting to physical punishment, and within the requirement of current policy, handle children's negative reactions and unacceptable behaviour, and encourage positive behaviour patterns.
- An ability to plan for and provide an appropriate routine for children which balances the child's needs, including those of play and learning, and gives goals which can be achieved in measuring the child's level of understanding and development.
- An ability to observe and respond appropriately to the possibility of child abuse and neglect.
- An ability to observe and assess children, clearly recording development.
- An ability to challenge appropriately, to ensure that foster care practice is anti-discriminatory and respects all children and their families.
- An ability to advocate on behalf of children.
- An ability to help children and families cope with loss and bereavement – this may be because of life threatening illness, separation through adoption, or loss of their family.
- An ability to work closely with other professionals in carrying out individual therapeutic programmes, skills development, behaviour modification or educational programmes with children with appropriate supervision and consultation.
- An ability to work closely with other professionals, sharing information, exchanging skills, and working under guidance of, or in collaboration with, other professionals with the child.

**Please note:** There is no expectation that a carer would undertake all these tasks at the same time. They will however, need to demonstrate their ability to undertake them and be available and willing to do so depending on the demands of individual placements.

#### **Band 4**

Carers in this band will have demonstrated that they meet all of the requirements under Band 3 and in addition will have been fostering for more than 2 years.

They will have had their second review held and positively appraised by either the fostering panel or the manager responsible for conducting reviews outside of the panel and this decision will have been upheld by the Agency Decision Maker.

Carers will also need to complete a minimum of 20 hours training in a year in accordance with their personal development plan that has been drawn up in agreement with their supervising social worker.

There is an expectation that carers coming on to Band 4 will have come through the foster care career structure. However, there may be a place for people with a relevant qualification to enter this grade immediately if they can prove that they have appropriate qualifications and working child care experience. All Band 4 foster carers must meet the requirements as set out in Bands 1 and 2 skill profiles. In addition they should be able to offer the following, of which criteria 1 – 4 are core, four of the remaining six must also be demonstrated.

1. Have proven relevant child care experience which would include fostering, **or** have a professional qualification which is appropriate to the care of children, and usually have worked for a number of years in this profession.
2. Be able to accept and deal with children / young people assessed as presenting behaviour which causes serious management problems.
3. Maintain an awareness and knowledge of current legislation and current issues in child care and good practice.
4. An ability to take responsibility for individual programmes of skills development for children, and work with them and their parents and other professionals to achieve the goals of the programmes.
5. Be able, in conjunction with the agency, to take a key role in training other carers.
6. Be able to offer support to carers on a formal basis e.g. mentoring.
7. Have the ability, and willingness to take part in, intensive therapeutic work with children with appropriate supervision and consultation.
8. Where requested and planned to work with the Department, with children and families to avoid removal of children from their home environment.
9. Have the ability and willingness to supervise those contact visits, where it is not deemed safe or desirable for contact to occur without a third party, and where it cannot happen in the child's current placement.
10. Take responsibility for seeking out training appropriate for own needs.
11. Have an ability and willingness to take part in events to promote the fostering service.

There is no expectation that carers would undertake all these tasks at the same time. They will, however, have to demonstrate their ability to undertake them and be available and willing to do so depending upon the demands of placements. This approach does allow some carers to move to a supportive, training role in relation to other carers, whilst some will choose to develop their child care skills. If the Fostering Service is not using a particular carers skills this does not signify that the carer should lose the Band 3 payment. It is the agency's responsibility to use carer's skills appropriately.

## **Band 5**



In addition to meeting all of the requirements in Band 4, carers in this band will have been fostering for more than 3 years and will have had their third review positively appraised by either the fostering panel or the manager responsible for conducting foster carer reviews and this decision will have been upheld by the agency decision maker.

Band 5 carers will continue on this rate on condition that they continue to meet the requirements of their personal development plan and the band is confirmed at the time of their annual review.

Progression of carers from one stage to the next will be dependent on the carers undertaking training in line with their Payment band as detailed above.

## 1. TRAINING NEEDS

1.1 There is an initial expectation that foster carers will undertake training. A new training programme will be introduced during the current financial year and will form part of the agreement between foster carers and the Authority.

## 2. INTERIM FEE (RETAINER)

2.1 'General' (not Family & Friends) carers who are approved to care for a child on a full time basis and who have no child in placement can receive a discretionary *interim fee* of £52.20 a week for a maximum of 3 months from the ending of their last placement.

2.2 This payment is made on the condition that the carers are available for a placement throughout this 3 month period and that they take any placement that is a reasonable match if one is offered. In agreeing to make this payment, the Family Placement Team Manager will consider the carer's availability to take placements and the likelihood of a placement being made if required, with the carer to whom the payment is made.

2.3 Carers who are offered a placement that is a reasonable match during this 3 month period and are not able or decline the placement will cease to receive the interim fee from the date the next payment is due to be paid. This decision will usually be made by the Family Team Manager.

## 3. HOLIDAY ALLOWANCE

3.1 Payable once per year, per child dependant on child's age, (amount paid will the age the child will be at end of financial year). The allowance cannot be duplicated if the child changes placement. At the discretion of the carer as to how this is used (ie, activities, holidays abroad)

|        |      |      |      |      |       |       |       |
|--------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Age    | 0-1  | 2-3  | 4-7  | 8-10 | 11-12 | 13-15 | 16-17 |
| Amount | £232 | £238 | £264 | £264 | £302  | £302  | £350  |

## 4. CHRISTMAS ALLOWANCE

4.1 Payable once (per year in the schedule due start of December)

|        |      |      |      |      |       |       |       |
|--------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Age    | 0-1  | 2-3  | 4-7  | 8-10 | 11-12 | 13-15 | 16-17 |
| Amount | £116 | £119 | £132 | £132 | £151  | £151  | £175  |

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## 5. BIRTHDAY ALLOWANCE

5.1 Payable once per year in the schedule prior to the child's birthday.

|        |     |        |     |      |        |        |        |
|--------|-----|--------|-----|------|--------|--------|--------|
| Age    | 0-1 | 2-3    | 4-7 | 8-10 | 11-12  | 13-15  | 16-17  |
| Amount | £58 | £59.50 | £66 | £66  | £75.50 | £75.50 | £87.50 |

## 6. INITIAL CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

6.1 Except on rare occasions, such as when a child becomes looked-after, who is over the age of 16 and is available for work, it may be necessary to pay initial clothing allowance up to a period of the first six months of the stay. This is not payable per year or per placement.

6.2 Itemised receipts/copies of receipts must be submitted in respect of any clothing grant.

|        |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Age    | 0-1     | 2-3     | 4-7     | 8-10    | 11-12   | 13-15   | 16-17   |
| Amount | £384.50 | £384.50 | £384.50 | £397.10 | £508.40 | £604.80 | £604.80 |

## 7. SCHOOL UNIFORM ALLOWANCE

7.1 If a child or young person is due to start or go to a different school or the uniform changes whilst in placement, the foster carer can apply for this allowance to purchase any required items of clothing.

## 8. LEAVE FROM PLACEMENT

8.1 One or two night there will be no deductions to the fortnightly payment.

8.2 Three or more nights away and the appropriate amount of nights will be deducted from the fortnightly payment.

## 9. 18<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY ALLOWANCE

9.1 Equal to one week's basic (Band 1) allowance £175.00. Paid in the schedule prior to the birthday.

## 10. EMERGENCY PLACEMENTS

10.1 Placements made outside office hours will include an additional payment of £41.80 per child.

## 11. INTRODUCTORY STAYS

11.1 Where children looked after are being introduced to foster carers over a period at weekends or longer in the foster home prior to being placed, a proportional allowance may be made from the foster placement allowance budget.



11.2 This should be discussed with your Supervising Social Worker whilst introductions are being planned.

## **12. EQUIPMENT NECESSARY TO EFFECT FOSTER PLACEMENTS**

12.1 This is subject to the budget allocated and authorised by the appropriate Manager.

## **13. MILEAGE**

13.1 Mileage can be claimed for journeys that are required to meet a child's needs (i.e education, health or contact). Claims can be made for journeys in other circumstances by prior agreement. Journeys must be minimum 3 miles each way and will be paid at the rate of 52.2p per mile.

13.2 Mileage claims must include full milometer readings for each journey and be submitted on a two monthly basis.

## **14. REMITTANCE**

14.1 A fortnightly letter will be sent detailing the pay period and the breakdown of the payment. This should be kept for tax reasons.

## **15. TAX ALLOWANCE**

15.1 Foster carers receive a tax allowance of £10,000 per annum plus £200/£250 per child. All Foster Carers are advised that they need to register as self-employed and make National Insurance Payments to ensure they receive full entitlement of benefits. Further advice is available from the Family Placement Team or from Fostertalk and consultation with the HMRC should take place as to whether it is necessary to register as self-employed.

## **16. PAYMENTS**

16.1 Payments are made on a fortnightly basis (except during the Christmas period) and are paid one week in arrears and one week in advance.

16.2 All additional payments/alterations will need to be authorised and submitted by the end of day on the Monday prior to payment.

16.3 Payments are made by BACS from Trafford Accounts Department. Any change in bank details will need to be submitted via a bank details form and signed.

## **17. OVERPAYMENTS**

17.1 These will be deducted from any future placements at a rate of £50 per schedule or at a rate agreed between the carers and their supervising social worker.

## **18. ADDITIONAL GRANTS IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

18.1 Where foster carers are put to extra expense on behalf of the Local Authority in respect of a child in their care, journeys to promote contact, education or the health of a child which are over a three mile radius of foster carers' home will be reimbursed. They will be paid on production of proof of journey, e.g. a completed mileage form. The mileage form should be submitted monthly.

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18.2 To encourage and assist children to develop their potential as would be the case in a normal home, and, where facilities are not available through the education service; grants may be made available in exceptional circumstances.