

BARNET FOSTERING SERVICE

TASK-CENTRED AND SPECIALIST FOSTER CARERS' SCALES OF FOSTER PLACEMENT ALLOWANCES AND OTHER PAYMENTS WITH EFFECT FROM 1 JULY 2012

TAX LIABILITY

Foster carers must register themselves as self employed and submit an annual tax return. Fostering allowances received (both the maintenance allowance and the skills fee) must be declared for taxation purposes. Barnet can provide carers with an annual financial breakdown of payments made to assist with their tax return.

Foster care tax relief allows tax exemption for the first £10,000 per year plus £200 per week for a child under 11 and £250 for a child over 11. This is in addition to your personal tax free allowance of £8105 which every individual is able to earn before paying tax.¹

Further information and advice on tax (as well as on National Insurance, Retirement Pensions and other benefits) is available from Fosterline, on 0800 040 7675 or fosterline@fostering.net.

STANDARD ALLOWANCES 1.7.2012

In all cases payments will be calculated to include the day on which the child is placed as well as the day the child leaves the placement.

MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

These figures represent the direct costs of looking after a child, including the additional costs of looking after a child who may have special needs, for example, additional laundry, food, travel, activities & household decoration.

Age	Accommodation 30%	Food and Housekeeping 18%	Clothing 10%	Leisure 16%	Personal 9%	Pocket Money 7%	Travel 10%
0-11 years	£54.70	£34.22	£17.90	£29.64	£17.11	£12.53	£18.90

¹ For persons aged 65-74 the amount is £10,500.

£185							
12+ years	£72.10	£44.66	£23.70	£38.92	£23.33	£16.59	£24.70
£244							

Clothing and Pocket Money

The amounts listed above are notional. The chart below lists the average maximum paid by age for clothing and pocket money; any money under the amount given should go towards Personal costs and any amount over the stated maximum should be taken from 'Personal' costs.

Clothing & Pocket Money		
Age	Clothing	Pocket Money
0 to 7 years	16.60	2.22
8 years	17.70	2.42
9 years	17.70	3.23
10 years	17.70	3.85
11 years	19.70	4.45
12 years	19.70	4.95
13 years	19.70	6.00
14 years	19.70	7.10
15 years	19.70	8.80
16 years	23.23	12.10
17 years	23.23	15.50

School Meals

Children in care in foster placements are not eligible for free school meals and costs for this should be met from the maintenance element.

Birthday and Festival payments

The following amounts are paid to the foster carer, for the expenses of birthdays and festivals, according to the age of the foster child.

Birthday & Festival	
Age	2011/12
0 to 7 years	£121.70 (66.00 on gifts)
8 years	£121.70 (66.00 on gifts)
9 years	£121.70 (66.00 on gifts)
10 years	£121.70 (66.00 on gifts)
11 years	£121.70 (66.00 on gifts)

12 years	£176.75 (98.00 on gifts)
13 years	£176.75 (98.00 on gifts)
14 years	£176.75 (98.00 on gifts)
15 years	£176.75 (98.00 on gifts)
16 years	£176.75 (98.00 on gifts)
17 years	£176.75 (98.00 on gifts)
18 years	£211.00 (109.00 on gifts)

FEE ELEMENT

The fee element of the foster care allowance reflects a clear model of competence-based career progression for foster carers. There are 3 levels for task centred foster carers:

- Level 1 – newly approved
- Level 2– achieved by evidencing competencies in caring for children and young people, via completion of the TSD standards portfolio
- Level 3 – achieved by evidencing various criteria of advanced foster caring ability and contribution to the Service

As per the Agreement with Specialist Foster Carers, there is a different fee element payable. Total maintenance and fees paid, by age of child, are summarised in the chart below:

	Age 0–11 Fee	Age 0 – 11 Maintenance	Total	Age 12+ Fee	Age 12+ Maintenance	Total
Level 1 Carers	181	185	366	181	244	425
Level 2 Carers	211	185	396	211	244	455
Level 3 Carers	289	185	474	289	244	533
Specialist Scheme	355	185	540	355	244	599

Enhancements

Occasionally enhanced maintenance allowances or skills level fees are agreed in relation to placements that are exceptionally demanding or costly. All enhancements to foster carers need to be agreed at the Social Care Resources Panel and will be subject to regular review.

ADDITIONAL ALLOWANCES

Travel Costs

It is expected that the usual travel costs of a child / young person will be met out of the standard allowance. However, if travel costs of more than £17.35 per

week are incurred or mileage of more than 50 miles per week is done for school journeys, hospital/ clinic visits, contact etc. a claim can be made for additional travel costs at a rate of 31p per mile.

NB: Requests for additional payments around such costs as contact, travel to a new placement for introductions etc should be made to the Supervising Social Worker.

Holidays

A holiday allowance is payable on top of the carers' normal weekly maintenance allowance for a maximum of two weeks each year, to enable children in care to have the experience of going away from home on holiday. This holiday allowance is not available for day trips; the expectation is that carers will budget over the course of the year for the additional expenses of days out during school holidays.

The holiday allowance is twice the weekly maintenance rate (paid pro-rata when holidays of shorter periods are arranged). This is payable as and when the planned holiday arrangements are confirmed with the Supervising Social Worker, and evidence of the expenses to be incurred may be required.

School Journeys & Other Educational Visits

(this includes journeys and camps arranged by youth organisations)

Such costs are included in the maintenance element of the fee, however, where such journeys are for more than one day, an additional allowance of up to £215 can be paid at the discretion of the Service Manager, Provider Services.

Retaining Fee

Where a carer is actively preparing for the placement of a child (attending planning meetings, having introductions etc) a retaining fee of half the fee element of the allowance may be paid with the agreement of the Service Manager.

Disturbance Fee

If a carer is contacted out of hours and agrees to take a placement, whether or not the child is placed, the carer will receive a payment of £32.10.

Carers' Holiday Leave

Task-centred carers are entitled to 14 days holiday leave without the child/ren who have been placed with them, during each financial year.² During this period they will continue to receive both the maintenance and fee elements of the allowance. For a longer period, the fee element only will be paid.

²April-March, paid pro-rata according to the number of months during which the carer has had children in placement during that year.

Separate arrangements are agreed with Specialist Foster Carers in their Agreement.

Child Temporarily Out of Placement for Other Reasons

When children are temporarily out of placement for other reasons, e.g. periods in hospital, staying visits with friends or relatives, respite placements provided for 'time out' after incidents etc, carers will continue to receive both the maintenance and fee elements of the allowance for up to two weeks. Any proposals for continued payments for longer than two weeks need to be referred to the Social Care Resources Panel.

Respite Care

If child care is required either to meet the needs of the child or the needs of the service (for example, carers attending training, a support group or a working group), the Fostering Service will pay the costs at a rate of £6.19 per hour per child for a period of up to seven hours or will help arrange and fund respite with another carer. If child care is required for the needs of the carer then the carer will fund any childcare costs from the allowance.

For respite childcare of more than seven hours in any one day, the respite foster carers are paid at 1/7th of their standard weekly rate, less the clothing and pocket money allowances for the child. When carers provide respite care for longer periods, their payment is calculated based on their standard weekly rate (again less the clothing and pocket money allowances for the child), paid pro-rata for the numbers of days' respite care provided.

As the child's usual carers continues to receive their clothing allowance and pocket money, the usual carers remain responsible for these elements and should pass these monies on to the child or the respite carer, as relevant.

For respite placements of children in need (whose normal residence is with their parents or carers rather than with foster carers), the foster carer providing respite will not have the clothing and pocket money allowances deducted from their payment, as in these circumstances it is not assumed that the child's normal carers will provide for these elements whilst the child is in placement.

Initial Clothing Allowance

To ensure that all children have a reasonable standard of clothing on admission to placement, an initial clothing allowance may be paid up to a limit of £339, at the discretion of the Service Manager.

Clothing allowance – School Clothes or Starting Work

On first starting school a payment of £108.00 will be made. Yearly payments of £88.85 are made thereafter other than the year the child starts secondary school, when a payment of up to £293 will be made. When the child leaves school, a

payment of up to £237.00 may be made to assist with clothing for college, interviews, work etc

Care Leavers

Where a young person remains in placement beyond their 18th birthday, the carer no longer qualifies for a fostering allowance. In exceptional circumstances Supported Lodgings payments will be made by the Leaving Care team at a rate of £125.50 per week.

Basic Equipment

Required equipment for task-centred placements will be purchased by Fostering Service, and may require return to the Service.

A fee for required equipment of up to £865 is payable when a child is placed in a long-term placement, this includes placement for adoption, permanence or in a long term kinship placement.

Young People in Employment

Where a young person in foster placement is earning a wage, they will be expected to make a contribution of up to 1/3rd of their net income towards their upkeep. They will also be expected to provide their own clothing and pocket money, and these amounts will be deducted from their fostering allowance.

Foster carers will continue to receive the full fee element of the allowance.

Other exceptional expenses

Other exceptional expenses can be considered for reimbursement by the Service and should be referred to the Supervising Social Worker for the Team Manager's consideration, if all relevant portions of the maintenance allowance are exceeded. Any ongoing exceptional expenses need consideration by the Social Care Resources Panel, as do one-off expenses of more than £500.

SAVINGS

Savings accounts

All children in care should have a bank or savings account opened for them in their name³ and foster carers are expected to regularly put money in the child's account, taken from the maintenance allowance of each child placed. Minimum amounts to be saved per week are: £5 for age 0-11 years and £10 for age 12-18 years.

³ We are aware that foster carers can have difficulty opening bank/savings accounts for children in care, particularly unaccompanied asylum seekers who have limited identification. Nationwide and Lloyds have opened bank accounts for children in care with limited identification, so may be the best ones to approach.

Child Trust Fund

Children born on or after 1.9.2002 and up to and including 3.1.2011, who are living in the UK and for whom child benefit has been awarded, have a Child Trust Fund account which cannot be touched until they turn 19. Please refer to the Information and Resource Officer in the Placements Team of Social Care, should you require information in relation to a child placed with you.⁴

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

If a child in your care is eligible for DLA, please note that this money must be paid into an account for the child (bank or savings account) and accessed by the Carer as necessary to pay for the child's care needs. Any unspent money will form part of the child's savings.

Debbie Gabriel, Service Manager

⁴ The Person who covers Child Trust Funds in Barnet is Mr. Alex Coombs: Tel No 0208 359 5729. It is advantageous to the child for carers to move their Child Trust Fund money into a normal bank account, as the CTF charges ongoing administration fees that are deducted from the child's monies.