

SECTION 1

FOSTER CARE ALLOWANCES

SCALE RATES

From 1st April 2026

| Age Group | Per Week | Per 4 Weeks |
|-----------|----------|-------------|
| 0-4 | £160.00 | £640.00 |
| 5-10 | £178.00 | £712.00 |
| 11-15 | £200.00 | £800.00 |
| 16+ | £235.00 | £940.00 |

Please note these allowances include provision for the following:-

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Food (including school meals) | 40% |
| Household costs | 25% |
| Clothing and footwear | 18% |
| Pocket money | 10% |
| Travel cost | 7% |

Foster carers are free to spend food, household and travel allowances as they feel benefits the child most.

When a child moves from one foster home to another then both sets of foster carers should receive the appropriate allowance for the day on which the move took place.

For every foster placement a minimum payment of 3/7 of the appropriate weekly rate will be paid for each placement.

N.B. When a child is initially placed, part of the appropriate allowances will be paid in advance if necessary. Any such advance will be deducted from the next payment.

For the calculation of Enhanced Allowances and Short Break Payments a reduced rate will be applied, which will be the Scale Allowance less the components for pocket money and clothing and footwear (see below).

REDUCED RATES

| Age Group | Per Week | Per 4 Weeks |
|-----------|----------|-------------|
| 0-4 | £115.00 | £460.00 |
| 5-10 | £129.00 | £516.00 |
| 11-15 | £144.00 | £576.00 |
| 16+ | £169.00 | £676.00 |

SECTION 2

EXTRA ALLOWANCES

There are four types of extra allowances:-

- 2.1 Automatic
- 2.2 Full cost
- 2.3 Up to a maximum
- 2.4 Exceptional circumstances

2.1 Automatic

- (i) Holidays and Outings

3 x weekly scale rate paid in 13 equal amounts and includes regular payment to the main carer

- (ii) Birthday

1/2 times the weekly scale rate paid in the payment period prior to the birthday, to the foster carer identified by the Social Worker.

- (iii) Christmas

1 1/2 times the weekly scale rate to be received in the last payment in November to the foster carer identified by the Social Worker.

- (iv) Retaining Fee

£39.84 up to a maximum of 12 weeks where it is the intention to use the foster home and there are no other foster children in the home.

- (v) Disposable Nappies

24 hours - £73.43
Night time only - £36.72
every 4 weeks

(vi) More than one Child

£10.45 per week - second child

£21.20 per week - each subsequent child

N.B. Foster carers who are fostering for more than one Trust should ensure that each Finance Department is aware of:

The number of children placed.
Which Trust placed the child/ren.
When the child/ren were placed.

Currently the computer information system does not automatically pick up extra children placed from other Trusts.

2.2 Full Cost

Foster carers must apply for these allowances as and when required and with application the need must be demonstrated. The full cost will be paid.

(i) School Activities

Items required by school for school attendance/activities, e.g. uniform, sports clothing, footwear.

(ii) Educational Holidays

For P7 and secondary pupils. A maximum of two such holidays during school life.

(iii) Tuition and Special Activity Fee

Payment of these fees where it is thought to be in the best interest of the child, including University.

(iv) Setting up Costs

Initial cost of setting up a placement, e.g. bed, cots, toys, bedding, furniture. The cost of maintenance and replacement can also be met. Any equipment purchased is on loan from the Trust and should be returned once the foster carers cease to foster permanently.

(v) Spectacles

When a foster child requires spectacles and wishes to obtain these outside the range available under the NHS. When new spectacles are required the cost will be met.

Contact lenses can be considered when this has been recommended by the optician.

(vi) Mileage

When foster carers use their own car to:-

- (a) enable contact to be maintained between the foster child, his parents, siblings and extended family
- (b) attend meetings to review the progress of the child and plan for his future
- (c) attend training courses
- (d) take a foster child to out-patient facilities
- (e) take a foster child to or from respite care in accordance with care plan
- (f) take a foster child to school or other educational establishment

They should be reimbursed at a rate of 45p per mile

2.3 Up To a Maximum

Foster carers must apply and Trusts have discretion to decide on the amount of the allowance within the maximum specified to meet the demonstrated need.

(i) Initial Clothing and Footwear

Up to a maximum of 6 times the weekly scale allowance.

(ii) Final Clothing Grant

Up to a maximum of 3 times the weekly scale allowance. This may be payable at discharge from care. This should not be confused with any 'leaving care' grant which may be paid to enable the young person to establish a home.

(iii) Personal Items

Up to a maximum of 4 times the weekly scale allowance, e.g. bicycles, musical instruments, extra toys.

(iv) Absence from Foster Home

In a situation where as part of an agreed care plan:-

(a) a placement is being kept open for a child who is absent from the home for whatever reason, i.e. hospital, residential care, or in a situation where a foster child has absconded and the intention is to maintain the placement, then the scale allowance for that child will be paid up to 4 weeks. This can be extended by negotiation.

(b) when a short break has been arranged between two foster carers the following payments will be made:-

| | | |
|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| main carers | : | Scale allowance |
| short break carers | : | Reduced allowance. |

For each placement there will be a minimum payment of 3/7 of this allowance.

(v) Cultural Events

Financial assistance may be given towards the cost of clothing up to a maximum of £161.30.

2.4 Exceptional Circumstances

(i) In certain circumstances, payment of reasonable expenses incurred by a foster child outside the above range may be negotiated if:-

- (a) it is part of a care plan; and
- (b) it is to meet extra special needs.

SECTION 3

ENHANCED ALLOWANCES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

For example, emotionally disturbed, children or children with disabilities.

Assessments, using the standard application forms, have to be completed for these allowances. Foster carers who receive enhanced allowances are responsible for declaring these to the Inspector of Taxes for their area.

The payment of an enhanced allowance is to cater for the child's special needs. Consequently any percentage enhanced rate will be paid to the foster parent who has care of the child. In short break situations (see Section 2.3 (iv) (b)) the percentage enhancement will apply to the reduced rates and will be paid to the short break. The main carer will receive the scale (i.e. un-enhanced) rates.

SECTION 4

FOSTER CHILDREN OF WORKING AGE

- a) If a young person is 16 or over and is in full time education, carers will receive allowances as set out in the scale rates.

- b) If a young person of 16 or over is not in full time education and is in receipt of an income of any kind, then that young person may be expected to make a contribution towards their maintenance. The level of contribution is to be agreed between the young person, their foster carer and social worker and verified at a Looked After Child Review.

The carer will continue to receive the age appropriate fostering allowance plus any enhancements less the agreed amount of contribution to be made by the young person.

- (c) If the young person starts to receive an income of any kind, it is important that the young person's social worker is informed of this immediately.

There is an exception that foster carers will allow and encourage young people to manage some of their own finances. Carers may wish to give young people an element of the fostering allowance e.g. for clothing and pocket money. Where this is not appropriate, the reasons should be clear. Financial arrangements should avoid any disincentive to take employment. Young people should also be encouraged to put some money into savings.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF STANDARD EQUIPMENT FOR FOSTER PARENTS

The Trust has the responsibility to provide essential equipment which may be needed when children are placed in foster care and it not otherwise available in the foster home. Such items of equipment might include:

- Cot or bed
- Bedding
- Pillows
- Bedroom Furniture
- Pram / Pushchair / Buggy
- Highchair
- Fireguard
- Playpen
- Baby Equipment
- Safety Equipment
- Car Seat or Harness
- Toys
- Household Equipment