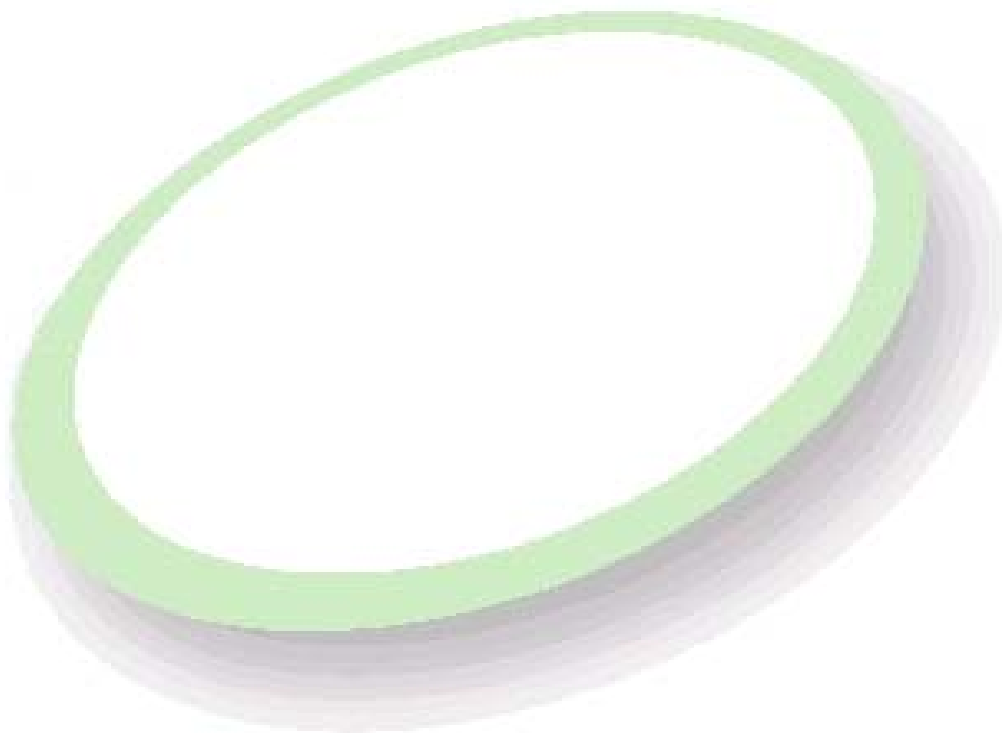


**Payments to Foster Carers Approved For Specific  
Children Only by the London Borough of Ealing**



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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Ealing Council run three fostering schemes and carers may be approved for one or more of these schemes.
1. Foster carers approved to foster any child or children
  2. Foster carers who have been approved to care for a specific named child or children only.
  3. Supported lodging carers.
- 1.2 The following procedure provides information on the allowance payable to foster carers who have been approved to care for a specific named child or children only.
- 1.3 This payment consists of a weekly maintenance allowance for each child that is fostered. The amount payable is based on Fostering Networks minimum recommended levels to meet the costs of caring for a child is paid to all approved foster carers.

## **2.0 The weekly maintenance allowance**

- 2.1 The whole allowance is to be either spent on the child or saved for the child.
- 2.2 Foster carers will be expected to evidence that the weekly allowance has been used for the child or saved.
- 2.3 The weekly allowance is paid to carers to cover the following main costs according to particular age groupings. This table is a guide for foster carers to use:

Age	Food	Clothing	Transport	Personal	Household	Total
0-4	34%	22%	8%	6%	30%	100%
5-10	32%	26%	7%	8%	27%	100%
11-18	32%	26%	9%	17%	18%	100%

## **2.4 Training enhancement**

- 2.5 All foster carers who complete an induction and three training courses will be entitled to an additional payment of £15 a week. This will continue to be paid as long as foster carers participate in three training courses a year.

## **3.0 Transport allowance**

- 3.1 This allowance covers all usual mileage or other transport costs, which might include the following:
- a) transport costs to a school within the carer's catchment and local area;
  - b) activities and social events – attendance at clubs, visits to family and friends living locally;
  - c) transport to doctors/dental or other medical appointments;
  - d) travel associated with school/educational trips;
  - e) associated transport costs in preparing a young person for independence;
  - f) Transport to meetings planned in relation to a young person's care.
- 3.2 Transport costs in relation to transporting children *will* include petrol, parking tickets, bus fares, bus pass and train tickets.
- 3.3 When a young person has been excluded from school and then subsequently accepted at a school outside of their catchment or local area, liaison should take place with the Education Department to ascertain whether financial support can be obtained from them for the provision of a bus pass. In London free bus passes are currently available for all children under the age of sixteen.
- 3.4 Funding for additional transport expenses if not obtainable elsewhere, for example transporting children to school outside their catchments or local area or transport to contact meetings is to be agreed in advance by the Team Manager.

#### **4.0 Household expenses**

- 4.1 This allowance covers a contribution to all household expenses including telephone and other household bills, wear and tear of furniture, for example beds and replacement of other household equipment, for example linen.
- 4.2 A start up equipment grant may be provided to carers, up to a limit of £500. This equipment should not be provided automatically but in accordance with the carer's terms of approval and likely needs of children placed. Once a start up equipment grant has been paid foster carers are expected to pay for replacement equipment/furnishings out of their weekly allowance.

#### **5.0 Personal Allowance**

- 5.1 The Personal allowance covers pocket money, activity money, toiletries, haircuts and phone cards and can also be used to purchase, for example books for the child or driving lessons. It is to be paid for on

behalf of all young people up to the age of 18 years, unless a young person is in receipt of income including an educational grant when different procedures may apply (see section 7).

5.2 How the allowance is spent should be agreed at the Placement Agreement & Planning Meeting. The young person's views should be considered according to their age and level of understanding.

5.3 All young people will receive pocket money as detailed below which will be reviewed annually:

0-4 years	£2
5-10 years	£5.30
11-18 years	Minimum of £10.50 to a maximum of £15.80

5.4 The Supervising social worker is to routinely review with the carer and the child/young person usage of this allowance, including the details of any savings accrued.

## **6.0 Savings**

6.1 All young people in foster care are to have secure, long-term savings accounts to support them in independent living. The supervising social worker should ensure that all necessary documentation is available so a savings account can be opened.

6.2 Any money that is left over from the child/young person's personal allowance should be saved. The aim should be to save a minimum of 10% of the personal allowance in a long term savings account.

6.3 Children/Young people are to be encouraged to invest more in long-term savings as they move towards independence.

## **8.0 Clothing allowance**

8.1 This allowance is to cover day/night wear, school items and associated sports wear, and an appropriate bag/case to transport clothing and items where necessary.

- 8.2 At the start of a placement with foster carers the social worker for the child, together with a child/young person's parent(s) and the child/young person to consider the clothing needed, including school and activity outfits and equipment.
- 8.3 Gaps in essential clothing/equipment items as identified to be costed and an allowance of up to £200 may be paid for each child (in cases of emergency placements) if the child does not have adequate clothing.
- 8.4 Thereafter foster carers will be expected to use the clothing element within the weekly allowance to purchase the child's clothes. Money should be saved to buy expensive items such as winter coats.
- 8.5 School uniform: Special grants may be authorised for starting or changing schools where uniforms are required. The additional grant will be no greater than £150. Ongoing maintenance of the school uniform should be funded from the weekly allowance.
- 8.6 The foster carer should hold any excess money from this allowance in a contingency fund clearly indicating to which child this relates.
- 8.7 The supervising social worker should routinely review with the child/young person, and the foster carer usage of the Clothing Allowance.
- 8.8 Any money saved from the Clothing Allowance will move with the child/young person. Any clothing or items purchased from the Clothing Allowance will also move with the child.
- 8.9 Clothing and other items will be transported in an appropriate case or holdall that should be purchased out of this allowance.
- 8.10 The Supervising social worker is responsible for ensuring that this happens.

## **9.0 Holiday allowances**

- 9.1 This allowance is three times the weekly allowance and paid in accordance with the age groupings identified by Fostering Network. Details of holiday activities must be given to the Supervising social worker. No additional festival or Christmas allowances will be paid.

- 9.2 Each child living with a foster carer will be entitled to one holiday allowance per year (April-March). This can be claimed at any time during that year (3 weeks weekly allowance)
- 9.3 Additional holiday costs may sometimes be paid in exceptional circumstances by the agreement of the Operation Manager of Placements services.
- 9.4 The allowance could be utilised to meet one or more of the following costs:
- Trips/activities
  - Short breaks
  - Holidays – accommodation/travel
- a. In all instances the holiday period and associated allowance should be managed in a way that promotes opportunities and experiences for young people in foster care, but these should not interrupt schooling/education.
- b. The foster carer should put in writing their request for holiday money, giving details of the proposed holiday and costs. A record of how this money is spent should be kept by the foster carer along with receipts.
- c. The foster carer's supervising social worker will routinely view how the holiday money is spent.
- d. Where the young person moves to another carer, and this allowance has not been utilised, the unused money will be transferred to the new carer.
- e. Where a young person wants to take a holiday, separate from that organised by the foster family, negotiation should occur between the carer, young person and their social worker, to ensure that the young person understands the choices to be made. It is noted that some of these choices will impact upon parental responsibility issues, agreements required and location of the holiday resort or nature of the activity by virtue of the child/young person's legal status.
- 9.6 School Trips**
- 9.7 Exceptionally if educational and involving overnight stays a discretionary allowance may be payable. Alternative funding should also be explored. This could include use of other allowances not fully utilised or financial support from the Education Department.

## **10.0 Birthday allowance**

- 10.1 Birthday allowances are paid for children and young people who are in placement on their birthday and are included in the payment period prior to the child/young person's birthday.
- 10.2 The allowance is equivalent to one week of the weekly allowance paid in accordance with the age groups identified by Fostering Network.
- 10.3 The allowance to be utilised for one or more of the following:
- Gift
  - Activity
  - Party/celebration
- 10.4 Receipts for all expenditure should be given to the supervising social worker.

## **11.0 Respite**

- 11.1 Respite care may be provided for a looked after child/young person by another approved foster carer to support a placement if this is assessed as being in the best interests of the child. This must be agreed by the Operation Manager of Placement Services.

## **12.0 Cessation of payments**

- 12.1 All fostering allowances will cease when a young person reaches the age of 18 years - See Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 – Arrangements for 'Relevant' Young People and Arrangements for Former 'Relevant' Young People and Supported Lodgings Policy.

## **13.0 Working arrangements**

- 13.1 Foster carers will be self-employed and responsible for national insurance and income tax payments. They are also responsible for seeking their own independent advice.
- 13.2 Details of a foster carer's income, money returned to, or retrieved by, Children's Services will be notified to the foster carer by an end of year statement.
- 13.3 The foster carer payslip (for taxation purposes this needs to be retained by the foster carer for all periods.

13.4 The London Borough of Ealing's approved foster carers are required to sign an undertaking acknowledging their personal liability for notification, management and payment of all required Tax and National Insurance contributions in accordance with their self-employed status as foster carer(s).

13.5 Information on tax and benefits from the Fostering Network is available from your supervising social worker.

#### **14.0 Arrangements for payments of allowances**

14.1 On approval the foster carer(s) will be required to complete bank/building society details for the designated payee.

14.2 Foster carers will advise the Payment Officer of any changes to bank/building society details.

#### **15.0 Timing of payments**

15.1 Weekly Allowances are paid on a weekly basis in arrears.

15.2 Details on allowances and fees and the timings are notified to foster carers at the start of each financial year.

#### **16.0 Management of over payments**

16.1 While the department strives to pay the correct amount each week, discrepancies do occur. When the foster carer checks their payslip every week they should check that the amount is correct. If an error has occurred he/she could contact their Supervising social worker or the Payments Officer as soon as possible, so that an adjustment can be made to the following week's payment.