

Milton Keynes Foster Carers Payments Scheme 2024/25

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Introduction

This document outlines the scheme of allowances and payments to Foster Carers for Milton Keynes Council.

A “Foster Carer” is:

- I. A person approved as a Foster Carer in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 or
- II. A Kinship Foster Carer who is temporarily approved in accordance with Regulation 24 of The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.

The payments are reviewed annually each February and any changes made in April.

The document does not cover the situation where any Carer subsequently obtains an Adoption, Child Arrangement or Special Guardianship Order. If such Orders are made, the fostering allowances will cease to apply, and the respective allowance policy should be referred to.

All payments to Foster Carers are processed by the Fostering Team responsible for the supervision and support of the Foster Carer. The Fostering Service aims to ensure that Foster Carers receive their payment without delay and that exceptional claims are treated fairly. Carers should speak to their Supervising Social Worker about any payment request or query. They should not ask the child’s Social Worker about payments as this may cause confusion and delay in payment. Where a Foster Carer’s request for payment relates to a child’s particular needs the Supervising Social Worker will liaise with the child’s Social Worker about whether the payment is appropriate.

The budget covers all payments that are directly made to Foster Carers. Any additional expenditure on Looked After Children outside the fostering allowance remains the responsibility of the child’s Social Worker. If the child’s allocated Social Worker is unsure of where the responsibility lies for a particular cost, they should consult the Fostering Service.

Foster Carers are required to use the *Record of Expenditure Form* to demonstrate how the allowance has been used and what items of clothing or alternative items have been purchased. Pocket money, birthday and festival allowance should also be recorded on this form. This is to ensure that children and young people have received their full entitlement for each financial year and particularly when they move between placements. Foster Carers should retain receipts for their records as they may otherwise find themselves challenged by Milton Keynes City Council and/or HMRC. Foster Carers are reminded that it is their responsibility to retain their remittance advice slips for tax purposes.

Foster Carers of young people aged 16 and over should ensure that the young person has sufficient suitable clothing for formal/interview situations, education and training or employment opportunities and for their future move into independent living.

Purpose

To outline the criteria and process for the payment structure for Foster Carers approved by Milton Keynes City Council.

Key Principles

- To provide clarity of the criteria and process for the payment structure for approved Foster Carers
- To provide clarity to all relevant parties about the role and responsibilities for each level of Foster Carer
- To ensure fairness and transparency when determining and reviewing levels
- Carers must meet all the expectations and skills required of them at application or review before consideration for progression to another level.

Legislation Framework

- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2010
- National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2015
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014

Foster Carer Payments Scheme

Payment to Milton Keynes Foster Carers is split into four elements:

- A. Element A – Maintenance Allowance**
- B. Element B – Professional Fee**
- C. Element C – Specialist Fees**
- D. Element D – Supporting Young People – Supported Lodgings and Staying Put**

Element A – Fostering Allowance – Maintenance Fees

All Milton Keynes City Council Foster Carers receive the national minimum Fostering Allowance (Element A); this is paid to Foster Carers to cover all costs in relation to looking after individual children and young people. The Milton Keynes' Fostering Allowance is linked to the Department of Education National Minimum Fostering Allowance (South-East Rates).

All Foster Carers receive an allowance for each child they foster. The amount depends on the age of the child and is paid per day or per week depending how long the child is in the care of a foster family.

The basic maintenance allowance is to cover food, clothing, pocket money, savings, a contribution towards housing costs such as household bills and other expenses associated with day-to-day living.

Foster Carers also receive set allowances to cover “*additional costs*” such as caring for a child over Christmas or another significant religious festival and the child’s birthday. When attending meetings or training, Foster Carers can also claim travel expenses against limits set by Milton Keynes City Council.

The maintenance allowance is not paid to supported lodgings carers who receive a different allowance, see Element D for details.

Element A – Maintenance Allowances

Milton Keynes City Council Fostering Allowances (2024- 2025)

Milton Keynes Fostering Allowances from 06 April 2024 (linked to Department of Education National Minimum Fostering Allowance, South-East Rate: <https://www.gov.uk/foster-carers/help-with-the-cost-of-fostering>). All Foster Carers, irrespective of their tier will receive an allowance. Foster Carers are paid an allowance to meet the needs of the children/young people they are looking after. The rates below show the weekly rate for children and young people according to their age.

	Age 0 to 4	Age 5 to 10	Age 11 to 15	Age 16 to 17
Southeast	£189.00	£208.00	£238.00	£278.00

	Age 0 to 4	Age 5 to 10	Age 11 to 15	Age 16 to 17
Maintenance	£152.00	£162.00	£180.00	£209.00
Clothing	£21.00	£24.00	£29.00	£32.00
Pocket Money	£6.00	£12.00	£19.00	£27.00
Savings	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00
Total	£189.00	£208.00	£238.00	£278.00

These figures are for the tax year from 6 April 2024 to 5 April 2025. These are updated every April.

There is an expectation foster carers pay for two activities per week out of the maintenance allowance.

Element B - Professional Fees

These fees are linked to skills and training Foster Carers have completed.

These fees are given to our carers once approved at panel. Kinship Carers who are yet to be approved at panel will only receive maintenance allowance, once approved will receive standard fee Tier 1.

The Tiers are linked to training and compliance of fostering National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations. If carers are not compliant and do not complete training, then fees will be reduced to Tier 1, until satisfactory training has been completed and compliance of National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations are met.

In addition, should Carers not continue to meet the requirements or competencies of the tier on which they are placed, they may move to another tier that best meets their circumstances following review/decision by Fostering Managers.

Payments are paid for each child in placement. If there are specific circumstances where Foster Carers are not meeting National Minimum Standards or complying for Fostering Regulations, Milton Keynes City Council will review the professional and if necessary, reduce to Tier 1 until foster carers are compliant.

Standard Fees (Tier 1)	£158.33 per week
Enhanced Fees (Tier 2)	£204.30 per week

Element C – Specialist Fees

We have introduced a range of specialist fees to recognise foster carers who offer care to parents and their children, children with additional or special needs or children who have complex needs, are likely to require additional funding to support the care of these types of placements. The fees are set out below:

Parent and Child Fees

This is for Foster Carers who have been trained to assess vulnerable parents who have a new baby. Foster Carers may be asked to support a mother/father or both parents and their new

baby. This placement is usually expected to last 12 weeks (but may go on longer depending on circumstances), whilst you support and contribute to the parenting assessment.

This fee is paid in addition to maintenance for the child and professional fee.

The Foster Carer must have a suitable equipment for the baby, including, cot, sterilising equipment, baby rocking chair, changing mat, pram, appropriate toys, and car seat. The parent will be expected to purchase formula milk. There is an expectation the Foster Carer supports the parent(s) to cook and prepare meals. Details of daily arrangements will be covered in the Placement Planning Meeting.

If the parent is under 18 and a looked after child, you will also receive maintenance allowance and professional fee in relation to the parent.

One parent Fee:	Specialist Fee of £478.00 for one Parent
Two parent Fee:	Specialist fee £478.00 for second Parent

Caring for a Child with a Disability

Foster Carers who look after a child with additional complex needs will be provided with a higher allowance. The allowances below will be paid additional to the maintenance allowance and professional fee.

This allowance is agreed at the commencement of when the child is placed and will be subject to review by a Manager and Head of Service.

There is an eligibility criteria, defining how the fees will be applied (see appendix 7 for details)

Standard Fees:	£75.00
Enhanced fees	£146.00
Enhanced plus:	£186.00

Solo Placements or Children with Complex Needs

Foster Carers who take a child who presents with complex needs, where the child is at risk of entering into a residential placement or stepping down from residential placement due to presenting complex behaviours, for example, high risk missing, exploitation, criminal activity or displaying challenging behaviour. Foster Carers offering a home to a child or young person with complex needs must understand trauma and attachment, and skilled in managing complex children.

The allowances below will be paid in addition to maintenance and professional fee.

The allowance will be agreed with Foster Carer at the commencement of the child being placed and be subject to regular reviews. The allowance will be agreed by a manager and approved by Head of Service. (See appendix 7 for criteria).

Standard Fees:	£146.00
Enhanced fees:	£186.00
Enhanced plus:	£250.00

Emergency Carers and Same Day Placements

If you agree to take a child in an emergency outside of working hours or agree to take a child the same day. You will be given a one-off fee for the inconvenience per child.

This allowance is paid in addition to Maintenance and Professional fee. If the child has complex needs or a disability, then the additional rates above may also apply.

Emergency rate outside of working hours i.e., after 6:00pm and before 8:00am Monday to Friday, weekends/bank holidays. Only applicable to those placements arranged by out of hours worker/ESWT.	£400.00 per child
Same Day placement within working hours	£150.00 per child

Element D - Supporting Young People – Supported Lodgings and Staying Put

Supported lodgings services provide a young person with a room of their own in a private home where they are a member of the household. The householder, or host, provides a safe and supportive environment, working alongside professional services to help and support the young person in gaining skills for independent adult life.

This is not a fostering role or assessed under the Fostering Regulations.

There are two broad types of supported lodgings service, those which offer:

- a response to a crisis in the home life of a young person by housing them for a short time (between one night and six weeks) while efforts are made to resolve the crisis in a way

which enables them safely to resume living with their family or move in with extended family or friends

- a lodging for up to two or three years for a young person while they develop skills and confidence and prepare for adult life.

Supported lodgings carers do not receive maintenance allowance or professional fee.

Staying Put

This fee is paid if you provide a home to a young person that you have fostered and continue to care for beyond their 18th birthday. This is a flat rate fee and foster carers' will not receive any maintenance or professional fee.

Staying Put and Supported lodgings carers will receive the following per week:

Total:	£265.59
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A young person can claim Universal Credit and their Personal Adviser is available to help.

Other Benefits and Incentives for Foster Carers

Refer a Friend

Help us increase our fostering community. If you know someone who is keen to become a Foster Carer for Milton Keynes City Council and they are successfully assessed and approved by panel and our Agency Decision Maker, you will receive an incentive payment of **£1500**. There is no limit to the number of people you can introduce to Milton Keynes City Council.

Already Approved as a Foster Carer

If you are already approved as a Foster Carer and working for an independent fostering agency or local authority, you can transfer to us. We will make the transfer as easy as possible for you taking care of your assessment. We will give you a **£2000** golden hello for moving to us following successful panel approval and approval by ADM.

Retainers

Some Carers hold the bed open for a child who is away at residential school and returns during school holidays or for the occasional weekends.

This rate will be dependent on the child's situation and subject to senior management agreement. This does not include young people away at university, this will be agreed separately.

Standard fee:	£75.00 per week When the child returns proportion of maintenance and professional fee to be paid
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Day Care/Sessional Work Rates

Day Care and Sessional Rate Fees	£12.50 per hour
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Travel Expenses

Where young people are transported by car to leisure activities, it is expected foster carers will cover this cost from their Fostering Allowance. If a child has a particular talent or skill, and to undertake the activity requires extensive travel, this should be discussed with your Supervising Social Worker to consider if travel expenses are to be agreed.

Foster Carers are expected to provide travel for children as part of the fostering task. Where travel is directly related to the child being in Care or Foster Carers development, this travel can be claimed for (appendix 3 Foster Carer Travel Expenses Form).

For example:

- Education
- Foster Carers Training Courses
- Family Contact
- Health Assessment Appointments (child and Foster Carer)
- Child Care Reviews
- PEPs
- Household Review and Panel Meetings
- Participation Events (including Youth Club)
- Fostering Recruitment, Retention, Engagement and Activity Events

Foster Carers and Supported Lodgings Carers will be reimbursed for mileage accrued at the rate of 45p per mile (HMRC rate) **for the entire journey**. The cost of travel by taxi or train should always be agreed by the Fostering Service prior to travel.

Example:

Date:	Reason for Transport:	Number of Miles:
Day 1	Child 1 – Home to School (Round Trip)	5
Day 1	Carer – Home to Training (Round Trip)	8
Day 1	Child 1 – Home to School (Round Trip)	5
Day 1	Child 2 – Home to Doctors (Round Trip)	3
Day 1	Child 1 – Home to Cubs (Round Trip)	6
Total Number of Miles		27

Equipment

Foster Carers should provide all the necessary equipment according to the age of the child within their approval. If a child is placed outside of the approval, at managers discretion we can support with certain items.

We will support with the purchase of new mattresses where a mattress has been damaged, e.g., by bed wetting, or for new baby placement where it is advised by the NHS that a new mattress is purchased for each baby.

All Foster Carers will need to source the age-appropriate car seat and fitted by the in-car safety centre who will invoice Milton Keynes City Council. Car seats must be brand new, not purchased second hand and in accordance with national guidelines on height and weight of child. All car seats have an expiry date, usually 6 years, please replace a car seat that has expired.

Money for the Child

We want our Foster Carers to promote and encourage good money management for our children. As part of the maintenance allowance, you receive for each child you will be expected to provide the child with pocket money and savings as detailed in the maintenance chart.

Savings Rates

Savings amounts are included within the Maintenance allowance. Foster Carers are asked to save £10.00 per week for each child they care for. Foster Carer must provide the child with the required savings at the end of the placement.

Pocket Money Rates

All children will receive weekly pocket money (as detailed above), this money will be taken out of the maintenance allowance. The amount given is up to the discretion of the Foster

Carer. It is requested Foster Carers keep a record of pocket money provided. Pocket money can be used for to pay towards phone costs, magazines, and games machines subscriptions for older children.

Suggested Minimum Pocket Money Amounts are as Follows

0 – 4 years	£6.00
5 – 10 years	£12.00
11 – 15 years	£19.00
16 – 17 years	£27.00

Children in Receipt of Disability Living Allowance

Please note: Saving large amounts of DLA is not encouraged and could impact on any benefit claims as the child turns an adult. This DLA should be spent to enhance the child's life.

If you are caring for a child with a disability, then you may apply for Disability Living Allowance (0-16 years) or Personal Independence Payment (16+). You would become the claimant and responsible for ensuring the money is spent in the best interests of the child you are caring for. We ask in each case you hold this money in a separate account, you keep a log of all money spent and receipts. We advise that this money can be spent on equipment for the child, additional clothes, additional items for around the home, for example, some children need items replacing more frequently due to high usage, outings, and activities.

The child's Social Worker should agree and involved in the making of the application as they will be asked to provide additional information. Once the benefit is awarded, Foster Carers should inform their Supervising Social Worker and the child's Social Worker. Spending of the benefits must be agreed with the child's Social Worker, Supervising Social Worker and Foster Carers should get written consent and record expenditure in the *DLA/PIP Record of Expenditure Form (see Appendix 2)* provided by the local authority.

The information about DLA expenditure must be available to the Independent Reviewing Officer for review at Child Care Review Meetings to ensure there is transparency and openness to spending of this money.

When a child is rehabilitated home or moves on all equipment purchased should go with the child. The Foster Carer in receipt of the allowance would notify the Department of Works and Pension that the child has moved on. Any money saved in the account would move with the child and arrangements for this should be agreed with the child's Social Worker.

Allowances

Birthday Allowances

An additional allowance is provided to purchase a gift(s) for the child/young person's birthday and the minimum amount spent on a gift(s) is **£80.00**.

0 – 4	£80.00
5 – 10	£100.00
11 – 15	£150.00
16 – 18	£200.00

There is flexibility and can be used as a contribution towards to cost of celebrations. This allowance will be paid for the last time on the young person's 18th birthday. These allowances are also linked to the Financial Support for Care Leavers policy.

Festival Allowances

An additional allowance is provided to purchase a gift(s) for the child/young person at Christmas or other religious festival and the minimum amount spent on a gift(s) is **£80.00**.

0 – 4	£80.00
5 – 10	£100.00
11 – 15	£150.00
16 – 18	£200.00

There is flexibility and can be used as a contribution towards to cost of celebrations. The allowance can be used flexibly to cover more than one festival. This allowance will be paid for the last time before the young person's 18th birthday. These allowances are also linked to the Financial Support for Care Leavers policy.

Any purchases using this allowance should be noted on the foster carers 'Record of Expenditure'. If the child moves from the placement once the allowance has been paid, the allowance should be passed to the new foster carer and recorded as such.

Holiday Allowance

It is the expectation of Milton Keynes City Council that children and young people are included in family holidays. An allowance of **£500.00** per child, per annum can be requested by the Foster Carer to contribute to cost of family holiday. Please bear in mind that this is per child therefore if a child moves placement and has already received holiday allowance during the financial year, new carers will not be able to claim this without agreement from Fostering Team Manager.

Emergency Allowances

Emergency funds may be needed for a child coming into care with little or no notice, either child or Foster Carer may need essential items in which we will contribute up to **£300.00**. This is paid at the discretion of the Fostering Team Manager.

Any purchases using this allowance should be noted on the Foster Carer's 'Record of Expenditure' and receipts kept.

We would ask Foster Carers to keep an inventory of child's clothes so it helps when moving placements for new Foster Carers to know what the child may need.

School Uniform

School uniform may be paid up to the rates shown below and are paid at the discretion of the Fostering Team Manager. Any purchases using this allowance should be noted on the Foster Carer's 'Record of Expenditure'.

Starting Nursery where there is a uniform requirement	Up to £50.00
Starting or Changing Primary School	Up to £150.00
Starting Secondary School	Up to £300.00
Changing Secondary School	Up to £150.00
Starting Work/Uniform, College Allowance	Up to £150.00
Contribution to Prom Expenses	Up to £100.00

If a child needs replacement items, then this will be paid at the discretion of the Fostering Team Manager. We will only consider financially supporting to replace items that contain the school logo.

Luggage/Equipment

Fostering maintenance allowance will be used to purchase two pieces of luggage for child in care.

Foster Carer Annual Leave Entitlement

Foster Carers approved at Tier 1 and above on 1 April each year will be paid an annual leave payment, calculated at 14 nights of Professional Fee.

Foster Carers who decide to take annual leave at a maximum of 14 nights per year, will continue to receive professional fee, but fostering Maintenance allowance will not be paid during this time. This payment is automatically processed in early July each year and will be received by carers by the end of July.

The child/young person's placement plan should include arrangements that need to be made for Foster Carers' annual leave and advance notice of this (ideally 28 days) should be communicated to the Supervising Social Worker.

Respite for Children

Foster Carers are always encouraged to identify respite within their family network for such occasions where Foster Carers should require a short break or holiday. These agreements will not affect your Annual Leave entitlement and must be discussed with the Supervising Social Worker and child's Social Worker prior to the event and agreed by the Fostering Team Manager.

If the Foster Carers request for the Fostering Service to identify respite for these occasions, the usual respite deductions will apply which is professional fee and maintenance fee to be deducted. It is essential that the number of changes in accommodation for the child/young person is kept to a minimum therefore careful consideration of Foster Carer's holiday is important.

Respite care for children and young people should be child focused. Some foster carers will need more frequent respite due to the presenting needs of the child. Where it is deemed necessary to support and maintain the stability of a specific placement details should be included in the child's Placement Plan.

Child Going from One Milton Keynes Approved Foster Carer to Another

Where respite arrangements are formally agreed, the carers providing the respite would be paid their full professional Fee and also the basic maintenance allowance, pro-rata for the number of days a child is placed with them.

The Foster Carer who has requested the respite will cease to receive the maintenance allowance, however, carers will still continue to receive professional fee.

If a child is in receipt of an exceptional allowance then the carer providing the respite would also receive this payment (pro rate based on number of nights) and the carer requesting the respite would cease to receive the exceptional payment pro rata for the number of days a child is away.

Children/young people going for respite should be provided with some pocket money by their main Foster Carer when going to a respite carer especially where the respite carer intends to take the child on a significant outing or activity. This arrangement is to be made between Foster Carers in advance of the planned respite.

Short Periods Away from the Foster Home

Foster Carers will continue to receive full fostering allowances when children and young people have occasional overnight stays with friends or family members.

In some circumstances following agreement and discussion with the child's social worker it may be reasonable and/or appropriate for parents to be given money from the maintenance fee to buy clothing items that the child requires. In these circumstances there should be agreement about what is a reasonable amount to be spent and the parent should provide a receipt to the carer when the child returns. Children should also be allowed to take pocket money with them.

Retention Bonus

A retention Bonus will be paid annually to each household following the successful HHR at a rate of **£250 per family**.

Overpayments

With carers being paid two weeks in arrears overpayments may occur if the arrangement of a placement is altered or ends in an unplanned way. Carers are required to notify the Fostering Duty team or the Supervising Social Worker. If an overpayment is made the overpayment will be recouped against the next payment to the carer.

The remittance advice clearly states what the payment covers, including child/young person's case number(s) and placement dates.

It is an offence to spend money that you are not legally entitled to.

Complaints and Allegations

If a child is moved due to an allegation, complaint or concern having been raised all payable allowances will cease with immediate effect but at the discretion of the Council, foster carers may continue to receive their Professional Fee for a **maximum of 16 weeks** regardless of whether the matter has been resolved or not. This is paid per child based on the number of children in placement at the time of the alleged incident.

The decision to pay carers during dispute will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Fostering Team Manager in conjunction with the Head of Corporate Parenting Service. Foster Carers will be informed of this authorisation by their Supervising Social Worker and/or Fostering Team Manager at the earliest opportunity; this will be followed-up with written notification from the Fostering Team manager.

The payment during investigation is a supportive measure to ensure that the Foster Carer is not financially disadvantaged during this period.

Record of Expenditure

Foster Carers are expected to complete a log of all income and expenditure related to holiday, birthday and festival allowances together with clothing and personal expenditure. This information should be recorded on the *Record of Expenditure Form* (see Appendix 1).

This will help the carer to:

- Demonstrate what the money has been used for and thereby reduce any risk of complaint
- If age appropriate, a young person should be encouraged to sign the expenditure sheet with the carer. This ensures that the young person is aware of financial management and the importance of financial and budgetary planning.
- Evidence expenditure to the Supervising Social Worker and the child's Social Worker who will monitor and "sign off" forms in supervision and statutory visits.

The completion of the form is required for audit purposes and to ensure that children and young people have received their full entitlement for each financial year and particularly when they move between placements.

A record of respite arrangements should be recorded by the carers to ensure that entitlements are received, and correct payments made.

Receipts

Foster Carers should retain receipts for their records as they may otherwise find themselves challenged by the Fostering Team or HMRC.

All receipts are to be retained and it is advised that each receipt is given a number, which is logged onto the *Record of Expenditure Form* next to the item and on the back of the receipt. This will make a receipt easier to find when it is requested by a social worker.

Insurance and Tax

Insurance

Foster Carers are expected to have appropriate insurances for their property, including contents insurance for their own personal possessions and for the property of the child they are caring for. It is also recommended that you advise your home, contents and car insurance companies that you are fostering. If your home is damaged or you suffer loss as a result of fostering which is not covered by insurance, some compensation may be available through Milton Keynes City Council. Please discuss this with your Supervising Social Worker.

Foster Carers must notify supervising social worker of any changes to circumstances in relation to this within supervision.

Tax

A generous tax-free threshold was introduced so most Foster Carers will find there is no tax to pay on the allowances they receive. Each fostering household is allowed a fixed amount of tax-free income from fostering of £18,140. There is also further tax relief available for each child fostered. This support is known as qualifying care relief.

For more information, click on the link [Help and support for foster parents: Tax arrangements - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-for-foster-parents-tax-arrangements)

All Foster Carers must register as self-employed and complete a tax return. To help with this, a Statement of Income is produced annually which states the Fostering Allowances and Professional Fees paid to Foster Carers during the past financial year.

If you have concerns about fostering and your tax situation, you can find out more on the Fostering Network website – www.fostering.net – or through the HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/foster-carers.htm.

Foster Carers are reminded that it is their responsibility to retain their remittance advice slips for tax purposes.

Tier One Foster Carers

Foster Carers assessed who fully meet Tier 1 requirements and competencies are eligible for a Fostering Allowance and a Professional Fee, if recommended by Panel and approved by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). Tier 1 Foster Carers may progress to Tier 2 when they fully meet the requirements and competencies for Tier 2 and is agreed by the Team Manager and or the Head of Corporate Parenting Service.

Requirements

- To be fully compliant with the Fostering Regulations 2013.
- To be fully compliant with the NMS Fostering Services 2011.
- To be fully complaint with the HCC Accommodation Policy.
- To attend and successfully complete every component of the 'Skills to Foster' course.
- To consider all placements of children within their approval category, if available to foster (vacancy).
- To demonstrate evidence in their caring role of their skills to meet the needs of children who have experienced trauma and/or significant harm.
- To successfully complete the Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards workbook within 12 months of approval. If a Foster Carer is transferring from another agency and previously completed a TSD workbook, the competencies must be demonstrated during the assessment.

Competencies

Caring for Children

- Ability to provide a good standard of care to children which promotes healthy emotional, physical, sexual, and intellectual development.
- An ability to provide care appropriate to the individual needs of the child.
- An ability to work closely with the child's family and others who hold individual importance to the child.
- An ability to set appropriate boundaries and manage the child's behaviour within these without the use of physical or other inappropriate sanctions or behaviours.
- Knowledge of normal childhood development and an ability to listen to and communicate with the child appropriate to their emotional age and understanding.
- An ability to promote a young person's development towards adulthood.

Providing a Safe and Caring Environment

- Develop a 'Family Safer Caring Policy' which will be reviewed annually or after any significant change in the household.
- An ability to ensure that the child is 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.
- An ability to recognise the particular vulnerability to abuse and to discrimination of disabled children.
- All children placed must be provided with their own room and personal space. This must be in line with Milton Keynes City Council's Policy.
- Expect to receive at least two unannounced visits per annum to safeguard children.
- Complete weekly Foster Carer logs.

Working as Part of a Team

- An ability to collaborate with other professional workers and to contribute to the department's planning for the child/young person.
- An ability to communicate effectively and, if required, produce written records for court and as a contribution to the child/young person's case records to identify any changes in behaviour and any reasons for this.
- A requirement to keep information confidential.
- A requirement to promote equality, diversity and the rights of individuals 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 use people and links within the community to provide support.

- An ability to use training opportunities and improve skills.
- An ability to sustain positive relationships and maintain effective functioning through periods of stress.

Training

Foster Carers should maintain an ongoing training and development portfolio that demonstrates how they are meeting the skills required of them. During the first year they must complete the following training courses:

- Principles and Values in Foster Carer (*including Equality and Diversity*)
- Safer Care and Safeguarding the Welfare of Children (*renewed every 3 years*)
- Recording Practice for Carers
- Emergency First Aid (*renewed every 3 years*)
- Good Health for Children in Care
- Promoting Education Achievement for Children and Young People
- What Happens When Carers Have Allegations Made Against Them or Members of Their Family
- Attachment
- And any other training identified by their Supervising Social Worker
- There is an expectation that Foster Carers will attend a minimum of 16 hours training each year.

Tier Two Foster Carers

Foster Carers assessed as meeting all the requirements and competencies of Tiers 1 and 2 are eligible for a Fostering Allowance and Professional Fee at Tier 2 (subject to recommendation and approval by the Fostering Team Manager and Head of Corporate Parenting Service).

To remain at Tier 2, Foster Carers need to continually evidence that they fully meet the requirements and competencies of this Tier.

Requirements

- Must have been fostering for at least two years at Tier One.
- Must have completed the TSD Standards Workbook and all requirements at Tier One.
- Must have completed 'Fostering Changes' training or equivalent (to be determined).
- Must have completed other relevant training

Competencies

Caring for Children

- An ability to encourage children to develop appropriate social behaviour, helping them to become more independent and enabling them to cope with their emotions as appropriate to their age.
- An ability to help children develop basic aspects of memory, thinking, imagination and manipulative skills through play and conversation 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, handle negative reactions, naughtiness, unacceptable behaviour and encourage positive behaviour patterns.
- An ability to plan for and provide a varied and appropriate routine which balances the child's needs, including those of play and learning and sets goals which can be achieved in measuring the child's development.
- An ability to help children and families cope with loss and bereavement resulting from life threatening illness or separation through adoption or loss of their idealised family.

Providing a Safe and Caring Environment

- 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 and anything else significant to the child.
- An ability to appropriately challenge fostering practices to ensure that it is anti-discriminatory in its approach and respects all children and their families.

Working as Part of a Team

- An ability to work closely with other professionals, sharing information, exchanging skills and working under the guidance or in collaboration with others involved with the child.
- An ability to promote the educational development of children looked after, including evidence of contributing to PEP meetings, attending school/college consultation meetings, supporting home learning, and accessing training/activities provided by the Virtual School.
- An ability to promote the health needs of children looked after evidenced in a healthy lifestyle, attendance of health appointments and recording information in the Red Health Book or My Care Journey (Health Passport).
- Complete weekly Foster Carer logs.

Own Development

- An ability to identify and access support and training opportunities.
- To use this learning to improve carers' own practice.
- Successful completion of Training Support Development (TSD).
- Attendance of at least three post-approval courses, as well as all the training identified for Tier 1 Foster Carers.
- Foster Carers are expected to contribute to the Service by being part of development groups e.g., training or recruitment strategy. They are also expected to mentor or "buddy" new or inexperienced Foster Carers or contribute to the 'Skills to Foster' course.

Training

Tier 2 Foster Carers are expected to have completed and following the training requirements stated in the competencies for Tier 1 Foster Carers. Tier 2 Foster Carers are also expected to have completed the following training courses:

- Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness (CSE)
- Signs of Safety – Induction Briefing for Foster Carers
- Radicalisation
- Attachment
- Managing Violence and Aggression

It is expected that the main carer completes all five courses in Year 2 and the secondary carer will have completed all courses by the end of Year 3.

Foster carers will attend any other training identified by Supervising Social Worker.

Examples of Exceptional Expenses

- Photo albums and memory boxes and printing of photos
- Transitions (food for the adopters/carers and claiming back tickets for activities etc)
- School photographs individual and class these are purchased for the parents and children’s memory boxes
- Printing letters and SDQs for child in care
- Cultural expenses, hair braiding/skin moisturiser, cultural clothing, food
- Allergy - Gluten Free or special diet extra costs
- Hairdresser costs
- Medication Calpol, Nurofen, children’s vitamins, creams and over counter medicine
- Pull ups as many LAC are not dry over night
- Sensory items, weighted blanket, fidget toys, chew buddies (the physiotherapist recommended many items such as balance boards, bean bags, balance beam, gym ball)
- Car seat for a second vehicle

Appendix 5 – Fortnightly Payment Schedule

2024/25 Fortnightly Payment Schedule				
Run Number	Period From	Period To	Date Payment Arrives	
P1	31/03/2024	13/04/2024	19/04/2024	Quarter 1
P2	14/04/2024	27/04/2024	03/05/2024	
P3	28/04/2024	11/05/2024	17/05/2024	
P4*	12/05/2024	25/05/2024	31/05/2024	
P5	26/05/2024	08/06/2024	14/06/2024	
P6	09/06/2024	22/06/2024	28/06/2024	
P7	23/06/2024	06/07/2024	12/07/2024	Quarter 2
P8	07/07/2024	20/07/2024	26/07/2024	
P9	21/07/2024	03/08/2024	09/08/2024	
P10	04/08/2024	17/08/2024	23/08/2024	
P11	18/08/2024	31/08/2024	06/09/2024	
P12	01/09/2024	14/09/2024	20/09/2024	
P13	15/09/2024	28/09/2024	04/10/2024	Quarter 3
P14	29/09/2024	12/10/2024	18/10/2024	
P15	13/10/2024	26/10/2024	01/11/2024	
P16	27/10/2024	09/11/2024	15/11/2024	
P17	10/11/2024	23/11/2024	29/11/2024	
P18	24/11/2024	07/12/2024	13/12/2024	
P19*	08/12/2024	21/12/2024	24/12/2024	

P20	22/12/2024	04/01/2025	10/01/2025	
P21	05/01/2025	18/01/2025	24/01/2025	Quarter 4
P22	19/01/2025	01/02/2025	07/02/2025	
P23	02/02/2025	15/02/2025	21/02/2025	
P24	16/02/2025	01/03/2025	07/03/2025	
P25	02/03/2025	15/03/2025	21/03/2025	
P26	16/03/2025	29/03/2025	04/04/2025	

Appendix 6 – Criteria for Specialist Payments

Children with a Disability –

If you are caring for a child with a disability an additional payment to support you as a foster carer, recognising your expertise and the complexity of the child’s needs. We expect most children will present with some additional needs when entering care due to their early experiences and being moved away from the care of parents. This is normal and would not necessarily mean they have additional needs.

Children who have a had a formal diagnosis or present with significant learning difficulties, developmental delay or medical conditions are likely to require foster carers with expertise and would therefore an additional enhancement would be given. This will be based on a discussion with you at the commencement of placement and be regularly reviewed by Fostering Managers.

Children with Complex Needs or who may Require a Solo Placement –

Some children and young people may be at risk of moving into a residential provision or in a position to step down from residential care. We want to do all we can to try and maintain a child within a family environment and keep the child within their community, these children are often at risk of going missing, exploitation or on the periphery of gang involvement or present with much more challenging behaviour, then additional fees will be offered to foster carers to recognise the complexities such children present. This payment will be discussed and agreed by Fostering Manager and Head of Corporate Parenting Service at the time of commencement of placement and reviewed at regular intervals.

Contact

The Fostering Team can be contacted by email dutydesk@milton-keynes.gov.uk and by phone 01908 253206.



Milton Keynes
City Council