



Fostering
Hampshire
Children

Allowances and skills fees

Your key questions answered



What are allowances?

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 allowance is to cover food, clothing, pocket money, 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 and childcare expenses against limits set by Hampshire County Council.

Rates for allowances and expenses are set annually by Hampshire County Council in line with recommendations from a fostering charity, Fostering Network. The Fostering Network, the UK's leading fostering charity supports foster carers and works to improve the lives of children in care. Recommended rates for fostering allowances are based on the real costs of looking after someone else's child plus the additional costs associated with a child in foster care and the roles, responsibilities and availability required of foster carers.

How are our foster carers paid?

- Your payments are made weekly via BACS on a Friday (unless bank holiday).
- Your pay remittances are normally received on a Thursday.
- You are paid by the night (in respect of fostering allowance/skills fees).
- Pay run is on a Monday (unless bank holiday), all information needs to be with Fostercare Payments by a Friday and placements recorded by the previous Wednesday.
- Pay remittance slips are paid from Sunday.

All foster carers have to register as self-employed and complete a tax return. To help with this, a Statement of Income is produced annually which states the allowances and skills fees paid to foster carers during the past financial year.

Foster carers are also 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.

Our Supervising Social Workers will be able to support you with any questions about this.

Age of child	Basic fostering allowance rate 22/23 This weekly allowance is to cover the day-to-day cost of the child in placement, per week, per child
0 to 4 years	£162.75
5 to 10 years	£185.36
11 to 15 years	£230.86
16+ years	£280.70

What about skills levels and skills fees?

Hampshire County Council recognises foster carer's skills and experience through a skills level award scheme.

The knowledge, skills and experience of childcare which you have will be discussed with you during your assessment to become a foster carer. This will be used as evidence in your skills appraisal.

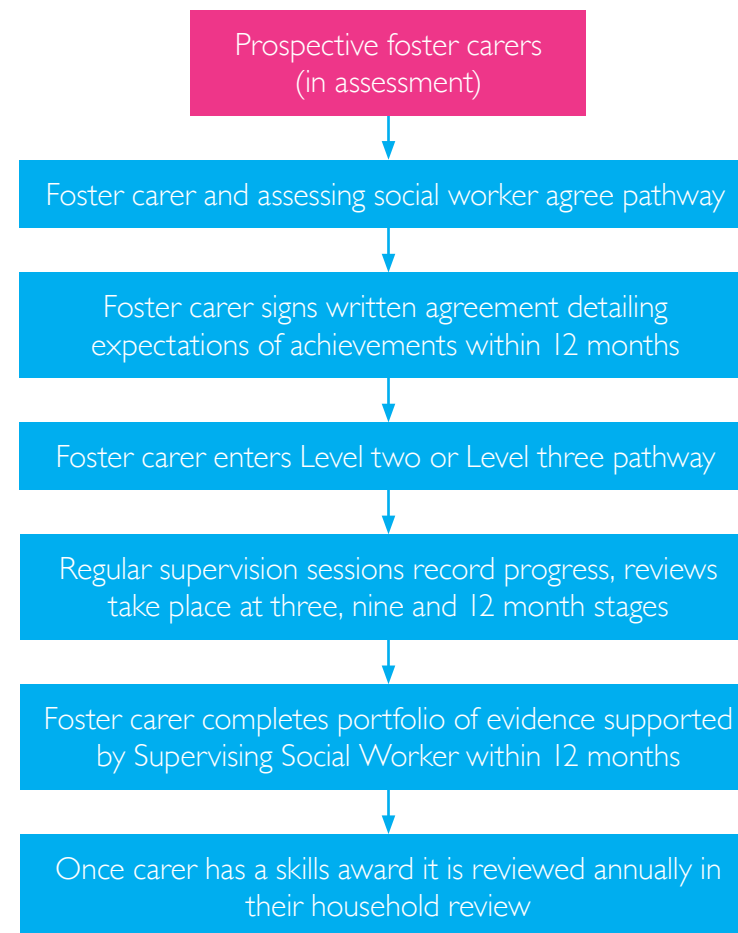
The skills fee is paid to recognise the skills of the carer, rather than contribute towards the costs of looking after a child. Your skills fee level is decided through an appraisal process. The process evaluates foster carers skills against a specific set of criteria. To achieve these criteria, foster carers need to evidence training, experience, qualifications, knowledge and skills working with children or young people with difficult or complex needs. The experience can be gained formally through professional routes or be from voluntary experience or other sources where you have worked directly with children or vulnerable adults.

Experience that you have in caring for your own children is also relevant and would in most cases allow you to start on the level two pathway.

When you become an approved foster carer, you can start on a skills pathway and receive the skills fee for that level when you accept your first placement. Training must be completed within your first 12 months of fostering to remain on the skills level.

Allowance type	Level	Rate 22/23
Skills fees	Level two	£110.11
	Level three	£343.07

For more information about skills fees, please visit our website. Additional information about the foster carer skills level criteria is available during the assessment stage of the foster care journey.





Home from Home

Let's talk about Home from Home

Home from Home, is support offered to families with a child or young person with additional needs. These could be physical, developmental, or emotional. Not only will you give a child the opportunity to have new experiences and meet new people, you will also build a support and close relationship with foster carers to allow them time to relax and recharge their batteries. The children requiring this service are aged between 0–18 years. They could have a range of needs from Autistic Spectrum Disorder and learning difficulties, to a physical or sensory impairment. We also receive referrals for children who have complex health needs, life-limiting illnesses and may require personal care.

Home from Home has its own allocated allowance. At the time of publishing, allowances are under review and will be made available on our website.

Hours	Home from Home allowance 22/23 This weekly allowance is to cover the day-to-day cost of the child/young person in your care
0 to 4 hours	£17.45
4 to 8 hours	£32.17
8 to 12 hours	£43.95
Overnight	£26.36
Waking night	£43.95
Whole week	£348.11

Frequency Asked Questions

How is fostering allowance (standard maintenance) calculated?

This is payable by the amount of nights a foster child spends with you. The night rates change dependent on the age of the child.

What is respite secondary/overnight and how does that factor into allowances?

It is recognised from time-to-time carers may require a carer break from fostering. The fostering allowance and skills fees would continue to be paid to the foster carer up to 21 nights in any one year period.

Are foster children entitled to birthday allowance?

This is equivalent of one week's fostering allowance, normally paid approximately two weeks prior to birthday, to pay for gifts/celebrations, any monies not spent should be put in child's savings.

What about religious festivities (e.g. Christmas) allowance?

This is equivalent of one week's fostering allowance, normally paid approximately end of November/beginning December, to pay for gifts/celebrations. Typically, any monies not spent should be put in child's savings. If the child is not in placement at Christmas this allowance would need to be repaid to Hampshire County Council.

What about holiday allowance?

This is equivalent of two week's fostering allowance (for holiday or day trips), claimed via an online claim form. It is only paid once per annum.

How are parent and child (P&C) allowances calculated?

There is a separate allowance calculation for parent and child placements – please contact us via fostering@hants.gov.uk for more information regarding this.

What expenses can foster carers typically claim?

Foster carers can claim expenses. These typically include but are not limited to:

- Mileage.
- Travel related expenses – parking, bus fare, train fare.
- School uniform (in some circumstances).
- Equipment.
- Emergency clothing (essential).

Is there a prom allowance?

We acknowledge the expense that can occur when young people leave secondary school to attend their school prom. Foster carers can claim expenses for outfits and travel.

What is Out of Hours? (OOHs)

A retainer for being on OOHs during a working week or weekend. It is a one off disruption payment made to carers if the child is placed via OOHs. This is in addition to fostering allowance/skills fees payment (if appropriate).

What happens when the foster child turns 18?

When a foster child has their 18th birthday, we will discuss with you the option of the young person remaining in your household. This is known as Staying Put. This is managed outside of fostering and has different allowance amounts.

How is my performance or registration as a foster carer checked or removed?

Foster carers need to be able to evidence that they have significantly improved outcomes for children within the Every Child Matters framework. Foster carers need to provide stability and support for children or young people who are difficult or challenging.

Can foster carers earn tax relief on their allowance?

Foster carers can earn an additional £10,000 on top of their £12,570 personal tax allowance without paying any tax. In addition to this, depending on the age of the child they can also earn £250 per week, per child before paying tax. For additional information regarding this please contact FosterTalk via fostertalk.org

Does fostering allowance affect benefits such as universal credit or tax credits?

Foster care income is disregarded for the purposes of benefits. For additional information regarding this please contact FosterTalk via fostertalk.org

What about emergency placements allowance?

In addition to the standard allowance, foster carers looking after a child, or children in an emergency, typically receive an additional emergency placement allowance of £100. Additionally, a £100 per child disruption payment is paid to carers if they take a placement via an out of hour's period.

How is respite care calculated?

Where a foster carer looks after a child in order to provide respite for either the child's family or another foster carer, payment will be made for each overnight stay on a pro rata basis. One seventh of the standard weekly allowance and skills fee will be paid for each night that the child stays. An overnight stay would be up to 24 hours. The level of skills fee paid for the period of respite should reflect the level of the carer providing the respite care. Where the stay exceeds the 24 hour period or multiples thereof, additional night/nights will be paid.

Where a foster carer look after a child during the day and no overnight stay is involved, the foster carer will still be paid for care on a pro rata basis. Therefore, one day's care would be paid at one seventh of the fostering allowance for the child. No skills fees will be payable.





For more information about fostering allowances and skills fees, please contact:

fostering@hants.gov.uk

[hants.gov.uk/fostering](https://www.hants.gov.uk/fostering)

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All fees are correct a time of print (May 2022). Fees are reviewed annually.