

Fostering Payment for Skills Scheme 2026-2027

The Payment for Skills scheme is designed to recognise the range of knowledge; competency and experience that foster carers possess, with carers paid an additional fee for each child in placement by reference to their skills level.

During your assessment your skills and experience will be assessed and the level you start on will be discussed. If you have relevant professional childcare experience or have experience of working with vulnerable children, then you can be considered to commence fostering at Level 3.

If you don't have prior experience or skills, you may be able to start fostering at level 2 if you start work on your TSD fostering standards and complete Standard 6 alongside the Foundations to foster training during your assessment.

Already an approved Foster Carer? If you transfer to us with Staffordshire (or other local authority) children already living with you, we will continue to pay you the same rate as your current agency whilst those children remain in your care. If you don't transfer with any children or the children move on, we will assess you against our payment for skills levels criteria.

Fostering Payment for Skills Rates

Level 1: The carer receives the fostering allowance for the child.

Age Range	Weekly Allowance	Weekly Fee	Total
0-1	£178.18	-	£178.18
2-4	£182.24	-	£182.24
5-10	£201.00	-	£201.00
11-15	£239.57	-	£239.57
16-17	£267.50	-	£267.50

Level 2: The carer receives the fostering allowance for the child and an additional fee for the carer's skills

Age Range	Weekly Allowance	Weekly Fee	Total
0-1	£178.18	£56.14	£234.32
2-4	£182.24	£57.26	£239.50
5-10	£201.00	£66.36	£267.36
11-15	£239.57	£91.28	£330.85
16-17	£267.50	£104.30	£371.80

Level 3: The carer receives the fostering allowance for the child and a higher-level additional fee for the carer's skills.

Age Range	Weekly Allowance	Weekly Fee	Total
0-1	£178.18	£136.85	£315.03
2-4	£182.24	£138.11	£320.35
5-10	£201.00	£162.89	£363.89
11-15	£239.57	£210.91	£450.48
16-17	£267.50	£234.57	£502.07

Level 4: The carer receives the fostering allowance for the child and a higher-level additional fee for the carer's skills.

Age Range	Weekly Allowance	Weekly Fee	Total
0-1	£178.18	£305.62	£483.80
2-4	£182.24	£308.42	£490.66
5-10	£201.00	£363.72	£564.72
11-15	£239.57	£363.72	£603.29
16-17	£267.50	£412.23	£679.73

Disability Short-break Payments

You will be paid the following amount depending on the length of the short break.

Introductions/Meetings	£20.40	up to 84 hours	£238.15
up to 6 hours	£40.61	up to 96 hours	£263.51
up to 12 hours	£60.85	up to 108 hours	£288.71
up to 24 hours	£81.17	up to 120 hours	£314.08
up to 36 hours	£121.56	up to 132 hours	£339.50
up to 48 hours	£162.14	up to 144 hours	£364.78
up to 60 hours	£187.43	up to 156 hours	£390.13
up to 72 hours	£212.84	up to 168 hours	£415.42

In addition, where agreement has been given by the area social work team to cover transport costs, the mileage will be paid at the rate of 45p per mile. Any equipment required will be provided through the Family Placement Social Worker, in conjunction with the specialist OT services.

Specialist Schemes

Intensive Fostering Fee Levels Fees paid to foster carers who are approved for specific intensive fostering programmes – resilience foster care and specialist disability foster care.

A fostering fee is paid at a higher rate and is outside the Payment for Skills scheme. The programme offers a home for one child or young people who requires intensive support. Each programme has individual criteria that the carers are required to meet.

AGE RANGE	WEEKLY ALLOWANCE	AVAILABILITY FEE	TOTAL
0-1	£178.18	£613.17	£791.35
2-4	£182.24	£613.17	£795.41
5-10	£201.00	£613.17	£814.17
11-15	£239.57	£613.17	£852.74
16-17	£267.50	£613.17	£880.67
Resilience Short Break Carers		N/A	£318.71

Emergency Fostering and Turnaround Foster Carers

These carers have specific approval and meet the individual requirements of the respective schemes, they both have a period on rota and time off and are paid an availability fee of £613.17 per week.

Specialist Disability Short Break Carers

These carers have specific approval for short breaks for children with a disability. Carers are paid an availability fee of £613.71 per week and the weekly allowance pro rata depending on the length a child stays.

AGE RANGE	WEEKLY ALLOWANCE
0-1	£138.98
2-4	£142.15
5-10	£148.74
11-15	£177.28
16-17	£197.95

Mockingbird Foster Carers

Mockingbird foster carers are paid a weekly fee of £613.17 and have a Mockingbird social allowance of £53.51.

Additional Allowances

In addition to the weekly allowance and fees we also provide additional grants for birthdays, Christmas/festival, and holiday payments.

Birthday

A grant, equal to one week's child's allowance payment appropriate to the age of the child will be made automatically for a child's birthday. The birthday allowance is provided to enable foster carers to purchase a gift(s) and to provide a contribution towards the cost of celebrations.

Christmas/Festivals

A grant equal to one week's child allowance payment appropriate to the age of the child will be made at Christmas, and payable for all children in foster care. The Christmas/festival allowance is provided to purchase a gift(s) and to provide a contribution towards the cost of celebrations. If the allowance is required for an alternative religious festival, a request should be made via the child's Social Worker.

Holiday Grant

An annual summer holiday grant is paid as an exceptional payment and is equivalent to two weeks' personal allowance per child (age related). This is provided to the foster carer as a contribution towards a holiday or for an equivalent number of day trips during the summer holiday period.

Family holidays are important social events that can build lifelong memories, and foster carers are expected to include the children that they foster when planning their family holidays. The County Council recognises that families have different priorities and family budgets when choosing holidays and this summer holiday grant is reflective of the available resources and the need to set appropriate budgets within Children's Services. Foster carers should take this into account when planning their holidays and activities.

The summer holiday grant is paid in **July** in advance of the summer holidays to foster carers and should there be circumstances where this allowance is not fully used e.g. due to the child returning home or moving placement, then the foster carer should return the summer holiday grant.