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for children**

## **Independent Fostering Agency Fostering Fees and Allowances Policies 2025/26**

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## **Introduction**

This document sets out the framework of financial support foster carers receive from the AfC Fostering Service. It details the allowances and fees that will be paid to carers and how this money is expected to be used. Foster carers receive these allowances to cover the cost of caring for a child. It also explains the circumstances in which additional payments will be made. The Department for Education set guidelines on the rates of these payments every April.

In 2020, Windsor and Maidenhead branch joined Kingston and Richmond in collecting looked after savings for children and young people at source. This ensures that the savings are held in a central location for a young person to access when they turn 18 years. This is managed by the finance departments within the Royal Borough's in which the young person is cared for.

## **Acronyms**

AfC - Achieving for Children

RBK - Royal Borough of Kingston

LBR - London Borough of Richmond

RBWM - Royal Borough of Windsor Maidenhead

CLA - Children Looked After

SSW - Supervising social worker

ICO - Interim Care Order

ISO - Interim Supervision order

HMRC - HM Revenue & Customs

DfE - Department for Education

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## Fostering allowances

In this section you will find details regarding placement payments to the foster carers. Which relate to weekly allowances, additional payments placements and alternative to residential placements payment.

### Child Allowance paid to carers

The DfE set the minimum weekly child allowance guidelines for Councils based on location. These change in April of each year according to the rates set by the DfE for that financial year. The rates set by the DfE can be found on their website. AfC will match these allowances.

From 1 April 2025 until the revision in April 2026, foster carers in Windsor & Maidenhead, Kingston and Richmond will receive the following fostering allowances.

Age of child/years	Total Weekly payment direct to foster carer/£ per week per child*	Breakdown of Daily rate for weekly payment/£ per child
0-2	198.00	28.28
3-4	201.00	28.71
5-10	225.00	32.14
11-15	257.00	36.71
16+	299.00	42.71

\*Total weekly allowance to the carer; This is related to the daily care needs of a child in placement and covers all general needs and supports for the child including clothing allowance, pocket money and day to day expenses. Anything outside of this is outlined further in this document.

## Holiday & Celebration Allowance

### Overview

All children in the care of foster carers at AfC are entitled to an annual holiday allowance of up to 'four weeks' which is made up of weekly age-related allowance, paid pro rata until a young person's 18th birthday. The holiday allowance is an allowance primarily for looked after children who are going on holiday with their foster carers. The allowance is calculated based on the age of the child at the 1st April each year. Discussions will take place with the SSW and allocated child

social worker around any necessary agreements (for example oversees holiday agreement, risk assessments) and to confirm details of the trip.

The payments will be processed twice a year; end of May/first week of June and end of November/first week of December (depending on pay run dates), this is reflective of Summer and December holiday periods, this will be made up of 2 weeks of the weekly child allowance per period. The child needs to have been in foster placement for at least 8 weeks prior to the holiday allowance payment run for the payment to be processed.

This payment is granted to support the child/young person to participate with 'family' holidays by attending family trips. To support this discretionary decisions will be considered by the fostering management team, via discussion with carers and SSW's. For example, should carers wish to book a larger trip for the year, as a one-off holiday, the fostering management team could agree to have both payments for the year paid all at once to support this arrangement.

The fostering service reserves the right to view the receipts and proof of spend for child's holidays and use of the holiday allowance.

This is effective from April 2020 in Windsor and Maidenhead as well as Richmond and Kingston. The allowance process was reviewed and updated in July 2020.

### **Review and monitoring**

Payments are reviewed every 6 months by the Fostering Service to ensure correct payments are made.

### **Payments to Foster carers**

<b>Age of child/years</b>	<b>Yearly Holiday Allowance /£ per child</b>
0-2	764 (2x382)
3-4	780 (2x390)
5-10	868 (2x434)
11-15	992 (2x496)
16-17	1156 (2x 578)

### **Paid Respite**

#### **Overview**

These payments should be seen as a reward for the foster carer's ongoing commitment to provide stable and consistent care for the children. It is expected that foster carers will utilise respite

through their back-up carers. All carers should have at least one approved back up carer. All foster carers with children in short (at least 6 months) and long term placements at AfC will be entitled to ten days' paid respite, paid at the carer reward fee rate pro rata for the period of placement. The child's allowance will follow the child to their respite arrangement. Additional respite could be paid in exceptional cases if agreed by the Head of Fostering/Associate Director of Social Care and/or through the Additional Resource Panel. The count of days starts from the date the young person leaves the placement, and the last day is the date the young person returns to the placement, the carer will be paid for the start and finish date despite any overlap with care on those days. The respite handover and finance forms will need to be completed collaboratively between the two SSW's.

It is expected that carers use this payment to arrange breaks/respite for the young person, this can look different based on need/best interest. When carers use their back up carers for formal respite, the carer will pay the back up care the child allowance aspect for the period of the respite. These respites are recorded by the social worker in the same way as any other respite arranged by the service.

Despite encouraging paid respite, it is recognised that not all carers take this entitlement in the generic structure. Discussions to not take up the respite option will take place with the SSW and allocated child social worker. This will be formally recorded to be taken into account at the end of the financial year. The payment of this is to be used in activities and resources for the child/young person. SSWs and the fostering service can request details of how the paid respite has been spent, carers are expected to provide this information if asked. All decisions for respite arrangements will be made in the best interests of both child and the carers.

### **Review and monitoring**

Review every 6 months by the Fostering Service.

### **Payments**

<b>Level of payment</b>	<b>Daily rate/£ per child</b>	<b>Total paid respite allowance/£ at 10 days</b>
Level 1	£30.36	£303.64
Level 2	£40.49	£404.86
Level 3	£45.16	£451.57

### **For the respite carer**

The respite carer will receive their relevant carer fee level as well as the child's allowance for the period the child is receiving respite. This starts from the date the young person starts the respite, and the last day is the date the young person returns to their main placement. The respite carer

will be paid for the start and finish date despite any overlap with care on those days. The respite handover and finance forms will need to be completed collaboratively between the two SSWs

#### Respite with Back up carers

The respite handover will need to be completed by the SSW supported by the foster carer, to ensure the back up carer has all the relevant information. Any payment for the respite to the back up carer is agreed between the foster carer and back up carer.

### Recommended breakdown of the Child Allowance

This is the recommendation of usage for the child allowance, each child's situation is different and therefore this needs to be discussed at the placement arrangement meeting and would be reviewed/agreed through the child looked after reviews, as well as exploring this through the foster carer annual review. Carers are required to hold on to receipts and bank statements and to when asked provide a breakdown of actual spending.

Pocket Money	Household expenses	Food expenses	Clothing	Leisure	Health	Other/school expenses
5-10%	20%	15%	20%	15%	10%	10%

### Pocket Money for young people in placement & bank accounts

#### Overview

General arrangements must exist in all foster homes for the payment of pocket money and savings as well as the opportunity for young people to buy personal effects and clothing at appropriate times. The arrangements should be set out in the Foster Care Agreement or the Placement Information Record for individual children based on discussions at the placement planning meeting.

#### Principles

- The provision of pocket money is good because it helps children understand the value of money, what things cost and helps them develop budgeting skills necessary for the future. There is an expectation that an element of the fostering allowance should be used for pocket money for the child or young person. It is expected that children will be aware of the amount of money they will receive and when this will be paid.
- We have provided suggested minimum weekly amounts for pocket money but understand that circumstances within every home are different and we would want this to be compatible with foster carers' birth children within the home.
- The amount of pocket money should be agreed at the placement planning meeting with the child's social worker and your SSW.



- Younger children should be supervised in how the money is spent but older children should be encouraged to be more independent.
- If there are concerns about how the money is spent these concerns should be discussed with the child and the social worker. If there is a serious risk, the arrangements for providing money may have to be restricted or supervised spending arrangements put in place. This should always be discussed and agreed with the child's social worker.
- Deductions from pocket money should not be made for fines or sanctions unless agreed with the child's social worker, except for reparation of malicious damage or to pay fines determined by a court. If a court imposes such deductions or fines, no more than two thirds of a child's pocket money should be deducted in any week.

All children and young people should be encouraged to open a personal savings account so that they can save some of their pocket money and money they receive for their birthdays or Christmas. Whilst children should have access to these accounts, foster carers need to support children to build on these savings. A bank or savings account should be set up and managed by foster carers. You will need proof of the child's identity (passport or birth certificate) and confirmation of the address. The child's social worker or your supervising social worker should be able to arrange these documents. A record of the amount saved and account details should be written up in the foster carer recording file. You should never place a foster child's savings in your own account.

### **Saving accounts for Looked After Children**

AfC is in the process of making arrangements in RBWM to collect savings for young people at source to ensure a one step process of savings, this would match the process in RBK and LBR. The current process within RBK & LBR is that a child after 1 year in care has an ISA account opened, administered under a government program (this is currently done by an organisation called Share Foundation). From that point the first year's savings are transferred, followed by transfer every 6 months thereafter. This is arranged through AfC's finance service. Once someone turns 18, they are able to access these funds through an organisational process, further details for this and if a young person is no longer looked after before 18, can be found in the Looked After Children policies.

From April 2020 each child will receive savings according to their age, as follows:

<b>AfC savings for CLA</b>	
<b>Age of child/years</b>	<b>Child's savings (£ per week)</b>
0-2	5.00
3-4	5.00

5-10	5.00
11-15	10.00
16-17	15.00

## **Other children/young people payments**

### **Initial clothing allowances**

Up to £200 is payable to foster carers to cover the cost of supplying basic essential items of clothing and footwear for children where these items are not available either from their home or previous placement. Requests for additional clothing allowance need to be discussed in advance with the carers' SSW and agreed by a fostering manager. If this child then moves from your care it is expected that they have adequate clothing to take with them.

As young people begin to take more responsibility, depending on their age and understanding, discussions should take place with the young person and their social worker about a personal allowance from the foster carer to allow them to purchase clothing, toiletries and other personal requisites independently.

### **Birthdays, Christmas or significant celebrations**

Through the transition of combining RBK, LBR and RBWM finance policies it is noted that for RBWM these provisions have been incorporated into the holiday and weekly allowance to align with processes in place for RBK and LBR. With this in mind, purchases for special occasions are to be discussed with the SSW and reasonable spending for each occasion to be made. However, where a child or young person is placed within four weeks of a special occasion e.g. birthday a payment of up to £100 can be agreed by the fostering manager. Where the child is placed within 7 weeks of the Christmas period or a significant religious festival a payment of up to one week's additional allowance can be agreed by the fostering manager to contribute towards these additional expenses.

### **Medical, dental and optical payments**

Reasonable expenditure for exceptional medical, dental and optical treatment will be reimbursed where not received through the NHS. Prior agreement needs to be sought by fostering management before purchase. Approval for such treatments will be made by the Head of Fostering. Foster carers must receive agreement from management before treatment is sought.

### **School clothing allowance**

Routine replacement and updating of school clothing for a child in your care is covered by the weekly allowance. Where a child is placed without any appropriate school clothing or changes school whilst in your care, the actual cost of the items purchased specifically for the new school will be reimbursed against receipts. This means those items which have the school badge or

emblem on them, and cannot be bought from generic shops. Those which are common items such as plain white shirts, black trousers/skirt, and general sports wear are not included. School equipment is also expected to be provided from the weekly allowance therefore items such as calculators, books, and school bags, unless specific school regulations regarding these are in place, will not be included. When a child moves school please discuss this with your social worker.

### **School trips**

School day trips or outings will be expected to be paid for from the fostering allowance. Where there is an opportunity for a child to attend an away trip with their school the fostering department may decide to fund this if it is demonstrable that it will educationally benefit the young person and could therefore be considered under the pupil premium. The PEP (personal education plan) is a forum where issues such as this could reasonably be raised and discussed. Holiday allowance is not to be used for any school trips or holiday programs.

### **Family Time (contact) Mileage**

Mileage for family time/contact visits will be claimed separately to all other mileage. Family Time mileage will be 100% reclaimable at 46.9p per mile.

Please see the google form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc0a5MSYJhXuXc3XIXU43-7cW9DSXkhpK8jCsPj8kMjki08Zg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc0a5MSYJhXuXc3XIXU43-7cW9DSXkhpK8jCsPj8kMjki08Zg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

### **Disability Living Allowance - DLA**

Foster carers are encouraged to apply for this state benefit for a disabled foster child. It is payable to meet the additional needs arising from the child's disability and is not deducted from fostering allowances for children under the age of 18.

Carers are required to keep a log of all spending of the DLA including receipts (for purchases outside the normal agreements) which may be requested by the supervising or allocated child social worker. General plans of 'normal/regular' use of the DLA can be agreed through the delegated authority with discussion from the child social worker and SSW anything outside of this would need to be discussed with the allocated child social worker. Anything not spent should be saved for later for the child, though spending is recommended as it is important the child/young person's ongoing daily and changing needs should be addressed through the DLA funding.

Further information on DLA can be found on the gov.uk website.

### **Placements with children from other Responsible Local Authorities (not AfC)**

On the occasion that an AfC foster carer accepts a placement from another responsible local authority, we advocate for AfC carers to receive our policy of fostering fee, child allowance and holiday allowance. For anything additional for the child, mileage and respite - this is agreed on a

case by case basis as part of the contract agreement between AfC and the Local Authority, and this can be reviewed annually but also through the year as needed.

### **Parent and Baby Placements**

Once a carer has completed relevant training, has been additionally assessed and further approval for parent and baby placements has been agreed, carers will be offered a range of parent and baby placements. The difference of costing below is based on the type of order for the placement and age of the parent/child.

No court order Placement (payment for parent only)	ICO or ISO court ordered placement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent fee will be based on their age; &lt;15 based on their age, 16+ (includes 18+).</li><li>• Foster reward fee (based on current level)</li><li>• £50 per week for accommodation/household costing for the baby.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent fee will be based on their age; &lt;15 based on their age, 16+ (includes 18+).</li><li>• Child fee based on the babies age at time of placement commencing.</li><li>• Foster reward fee (based on current level)</li></ul>

Parent and child placements are offered to support the parent in developing their skills and capacity to meet the needs of their child. For non court ordered placements, the parent is responsible for the finance and care of their baby. For court ordered placements, carers will be expected to provide additional oversight, and potential court updates, as a result of the baby's status being 'looked after', the carer will receive the child placement fee for the baby as well as the parent.

Additionally, there are the fostering rewards fees detailed below. In some rare occasions the alternative to residential placement fee may also apply.

### **Fostering reward fees**

As a foster carer at AfC, and with a child in placement, carers will receive a fostering reward fee in recognition of their valued role as a foster carer. These are paid to our approved foster carers according to the child's needs and the carer's skills and experience and includes;

- a banded reward fee based on your experience and skill level
- a supplementary fee, paid per child in placement if the child reaches a threshold level of additional need

## Payments

For all new and existing placements, the below rates will be applied from 1 April 2025. Compliance with the levels are detailed within the competency framework of AfC.

AfC carer level	Carer fee per week per child/£	Daily rate of the weekly payment/£ per child
Level 1	212.55	30.36
Level 2	283.40	40.49
Level 3	316.10	45.16
Alternative to residential fee	Decided on a case by case basis in exceptional cases and has to be signed off by Director of Social Care	

## Additional Financial Supports

### Additional Resource Panel

As of January 2022, AfC has implemented an Additional Resource Panel to consider additional support needed for placements and carers. The Panel was created in response to needs raised in stability meetings and learning lessons about ways to address ad hoc spending. The panel is made up of a range of professionals across children's services to bring together their expertise in considering best options for agreeing additional support.

The additional resource payment will be considered in two main parts;

- needs for the placement to remain stable e.g. additional respite or training
- additional payments for significant impact of additional roles e.g. tasks beyond those normally considered'.

The allocated SSW will complete a request detailing the current situation, impact, needs and a desired outcome. Examples of support options could include: external training programs, external therapeutic support, additional respite, additional supports in the home, additional payments to carers to cover over and above costs.

Current financial arrangements made under the previous scheme of 'complexity' will continue to be reviewed over the year as part of normal reviewing processes and will determine if they remain or alternative resource supports are offered.

### **Alternative to Residential Fee**

In exceptional cases where the child has a profound disability, has been stepped down from residential care or where hospital care or intensive fostering is seen as the only alternative to a residential placement, a higher supplementary fee can be paid. These decisions have to be signed off by the Responsible Individual in either branch and are determined on a case by case basis. They require the completion of both a complexity assessment and a short report which collates the views of the foster carer/s on their lived experience of caring for the child, the child/young person and key professionals involved with their care and support. Decisions around whether the threshold for “alternative to residential” are met should be taken within four to six weeks of the child being placed and where appropriate payments will then be backdated. Foster carers can ask that the Chair of the IFA Board review these decisions at intervals of three months if they feel that the child's needs and their level of support has escalated.

### **Connected Person**

During the assessment phase, if a child/young person is residing with the connected person (temporary regulation 24 approval), they will be paid child allowance based on the age of the child (please see page 4 of this document) only until completion of a positive assessment and Agency decision has been made following Fostering Panel and providing they are meeting level 1 carer requirements. During the assessment process the connected person will not receive additional foster carer payments or holiday allowance etc, however they can access to a set up payment if necessary and agreement of this is case by case.

### **Family Link Carers**

Family link carers are part of the short breaks service, there are different training and approval requirements associated with this type of caring support, which is generally offered to non-looked after children, who reside with their families. Family Link payments are completed separately through Children with Disability teams.

### **Payment for supporting the service**

This section of the policy provides summary information for our foster carers and staff on the activities that constitute as a foster carer supporting the fostering service, and the process for claiming the sessional rate that foster carers and the fostering service should follow.

### **Council Tax Reimbursement**

From April 2025 Achieving for Children will be reimbursing the council tax of approved Achieving for Children carers who are caring for ‘looked after children’ from the 3 owning Local Authorities. The reimbursement will be paid retrospectively and will be based pro rata on the number of days in the year that carers are caring for ‘looked after children’ in 2025/2026 (there is no difference on the number of children cared for during the year). For carers to receive the reimbursement, they

will be required to share their current year and following year council tax bill which will indicate that the current year has been paid in full with no money owing. For the purposes of this 2025/2026 policy, this will be the 2025/26 council tax invoice (received in March 2025) and the 2026/2027 council tax invoice (received in March 2026). Carers will be required to complete this google form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdPDcZv1EgX8416oVOwnU-qvpswfg5n65mrh2paiO8Lw7M3AA/viewform?usp=header>

Payments will be completed between April-June of the that year, depending on when the invoice details are received.

## **Payments**

### **Thank you payment**

As a thank you to approved AfC foster carers (all carers) who recommend someone to become a mainstream foster carer who then goes ahead to be approved at panel and by the agency decision maker, the carer who referred will receive a thank you payment of £1000.00.

### **Supporting the department**

Foster carers are entitled to a sessional rate of £12.24 per hour for supporting the fostering service.

The following activities constitute as supporting the fostering service in a manner that is not directly related to the care of a child:

- Contributing to training as a facilitator or speaker
- Speaking at events or in a professional forum
- Support for recruitment activities
- Any other activities agreed by the Branch Manager

### **Supporting other carers/ supporting care of a Looked After Child**

AfC offers a mentoring scheme to encourage and guide carers to support each other, details of this scheme are available in the AfC IFA Mentoring Scheme Guidance.

Where the fostering service makes formal arrangements for one carer to support another. The carer will be paid either the sessional rate (see above) for the duration of the arrangement (up to 20 hours) for arrangements that exceed 20 hours the maximum daily rate payable for the full time care of that child will be paid. Payments will be made per child/young person.

Should the support be in relation to providing transport for a child, this will be paid at sessional rate for the time of travel plus mileage (should it be relevant). Other costs incurred during the time of care e.g food will not be paid for as an additional payment as they are considered covered within the sessional rate and/or maximum daily rate.

All arrangements need to be discussed and agreed with the relevant SSW prior to commencing. The SSW is responsible for advising the child's social workers of all changes to 'normal' caring circumstances, even if it is just for a few hours to help the carer out.

### **Process for claiming the sessional rate**

Foster carers who have supported the fostering service in one or more of the above activities should complete the Claim Form, which can be found in Annex 1 of this policy and in the Fostering Handbook.

Once the Claim Form has been completed, foster carers should return it to their SSW

The SSW should then take the completed Claim Form to a manager within the fostering service for authorisation.

Once the claim has been authorised, the SSW should scan and email the form to Finance. Finance should then process the payment.

Foster carers should expect to receive payment within 14 working days of Finance processing the claim.

All claims should be made within 6 weeks of the activity being conducted.

### **Out of Hours Foster Carer availability list and payments**

AfC provides details of available carers who have put themselves forward for out of hours placement. This is updated weekly or if all carers become available within the week. To be eligible for this, you must have an available placement, ideally be able to take a placement 0-17 years and be available for the coming month, in case the emergency placement is needed for this period before formal matching.

Out of Hours is arranged Friday to Thursday, and carers might be contacted between 5pm and 9am on those days.

RBK & LBR will ideally put forward 2 available placements/carers within the week, and RBWM will put forward 1 carer. Foster carers will be paid £50 when placed on the out of hours list for the week and if they take a placement through emergency duty/out of hours services, the carers will receive an additional £50 during this period.

### **Additional foster carer payments**

The following additional payments may be made if the;



- foster carer has provided all necessary receipts
- SSW has given prior agreement
- has completed the payment
- fostering manager has given agreement and authorised the claim

### **Set up allowance (new to fostering)**

This allowance may be claimed, up to a maximum of £500 per household, to cover the cost of acquiring basic equipment which the carer does not currently have in order to fulfil the fostering task. It is intended to cover the purchasing of items such as cots, beds, bedding, clothes storage, desk etc for a foster child's bedroom. It can also be used to purchase essential safety equipment such as first aid kit, fire extinguisher, high chairs, car seats, stair gates etc.

This allowance does not cover any decorating, curtain or carpet costs, foster carers are expected to keep their house in good repair and replace such items as necessary. Where the actions of a fostered child result in the damage to internal fixtures and fittings within the home it may be appropriate to make an insurance claim (see Insurance section in Fostering Handbook for full details of procedures around this).

This allowance may also be paid to foster carers taking on a new placement where specialist equipment is needed that they do not currently have for example, waterproof bedding, car seats, baby equipment, or mobility aids.

### **Welcome Payment**

In addition to the set up allowance fee, newly approved mainstream (non-connected/kinship) foster carers will receive a £500.00 as a welcome for joining Achieving for Children

### **Introductory costs**

Where a foster carer is involved in introductions either to a child or facilitating introducing a child to a future placement, reasonable travelling expenses and overnight accommodation may be paid. This should be discussed as part of the introductions planning process.

### **Additional travelling expenses**

As stated, it is an expectation that foster carers provide appropriate transport depending on the child's needs and some travelling costs are included in the fostering allowance. However, where a carer is undertaking significant travelling, over 150 miles within a month (per child) the excess may be reimbursed. Claims must be submitted within three months of the date of travel and will be paid at the local authority mileage rate which currently stands at 46.9p per mile.

Where a foster carer is using public transport and the cost of this exceeds £70.35 a month, the excess may be reimbursed. (This figure is based on what 150 driven miles would cost if they were

reimbursed at the mileage rate of 46.9p.)

### **DBS/medical costs**

There is an expectation that all foster carers and adults in the home are set up on the DBS updating service. This costs £13 per year per person which AfC will reimburse. From December 2022, AfC will not continue to complete DBS checks for carers unless it is an initial DBS check. Therefore the updating service will need to be used and upon receipt of payment, the allocated SSW will process a reimbursement through Finance. More information on the DBS service can be [found here](#).

Every 3 years approved carers require a full medical, the cost of this is covered by AfC, and the medical centre will send invoices to AfC Fostering for processing upon completion of the medical.

### **Absence of child/young person from placement**

#### **Missing from placement**

The child's fostering allowance and fee will be paid to the carers if the child is missing from placement. If after 7 days the child is still missing decisions about the placement will be subject to normal care planning processes, this may include ending the placement.

#### **Hospitalisation**

The full allowance and fee will be paid to the carers if a child or young person is hospitalised with the expectation that the carer supports the child as any parent would during stays at the hospital. If after 7 days the child is still in hospital, the payment of the child's allowance may be freezed, and this will be negotiated with the foster carer. This may include negotiating the payment of a retainer until the child or young person returns to placement. The negotiation will take into account the amount of contact that the foster carer maintains with the child or young person whilst they are in hospital.

Foster carers are expected to visit their children or young people every day in hospital unless there are specific circumstances that prevent this. They are also expected to call the child every day.

### **Overpayments**

AfC will do everything we can to avoid over payments, should the situation arise in which we overpay you, we will recover the money in the following payment due to you and/or any future payments, depending on the amount overpaid. If the child is no longer living with you at the time of the overpayment being picked up, you will need to pay back the money in full, or we can take the overpayment off your next placement (if it is within 3 months of you being notified of the overpayment). It is your responsibility to inform us of any payments made to you that you were not expecting.

## **Payment during investigations of allegations**

In response to the fees and allowances consultation, the IFA Board has agreed that foster carers will continue to receive fee payments while allegations of malpractice are investigated up to the point of formal conclusion of a Standards of Care Investigation. Allowances will follow the child(ren) so could not be paid to the foster carer if the child(ren) is removed from their care during the investigation.

## **Keeping records and receipts of payments and purchases**

Foster Carers are expected to keep records and receipts (where possible) of payments where they have used for the additional allowances and holiday allowance. AfC requests carers keep these records for at least 3 years, or the duration of a long term matched placement. The reason for this, is on the possible occasion in which a complaint or concern is raised regarding spending. SSWs will ask to view receipts associated with spending especially related to holiday allowance, carers may be required to provide copies as outlined in this document or if concerns arise. Keeping records and receipts are essential for disability living allowance, as per the section above.

## **Foster Carer Tax and National Insurance Information**

HMRC and the Fostering Network, provide considerable information and resources for foster carers regarding their tax and national insurance;

HMRC:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualifying-care-relief-foster-carers-adult-placement-carers-kinship-carers-and-staying-put-carers-hs236-self-assessment-helpsheet/hs236-qualifying-care-relief-foster-carers-adult-placement-carers-kinship-carers-and-staying-put-carers-2019>

Fostering Network:

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/finances/tax-and-national-insurance>

## **Staying Put**

**AfC have an updated Staying Put Policy for AfC carers - September 2020, please view the policy for full details.**

Staying Put Arrangement refers to the arrangement for extending former foster placements in order to continue a child's/young person's transition into adulthood within a family and household supported environment. The intention is to ensure young people can remain with their former foster carers until they are prepared for adulthood as well as experience a transition akin to their peers. A Staying Put Arrangement is set out in the child/YP's Pathway Plan and LAC Review/s. The primary aim of Staying Put Arrangement is to promote a gradual transition from care to adulthood and independent living which recognises that many young people in care often experience delayed

maturity and that their 18th birthday may be an arbitrary and inappropriate point to leave a familiar foster care household. Therefore, the AfC “Staying Put” scheme is designed to ensure young people do not experience a sudden disruption to their living arrangements and ensures educational and training achievement is promoted.

### **Review and monitoring**

Review every 6 months by the Leaving Care service alongside the young person's pathway planning meetings.

### **Payments to Foster carers in AfC**

Flat rate of £275 per week.

Completion of full time education including full time ESOL until the end of the education year of their 18th year £417 per week.

Where the young person who is staying put is able to apply for benefits, this should cover allowance costs.

An alternative to Staying Put for 18+ is Shared Lives which is run separately to AfC and commissioned by the responsible Local Authority for the young person.

Additional information can be found in the Staying Put policy - January 2022.

### **Review and monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed a month before the end of each financial year by the Fostering Service.

### **Further information**

If you are a foster carer and require further information or advice regarding this policy, please ask your SSW in the first instance.

[\*\*Annex 1: General Claim Form\*\*](#)

[\*\*Annex 2: Family Time Mileage\*\*](#)

[\*\*Annex 3: Council Tax Reimbursement form\*\*](#)