

MFC Financial Guide

The Fostering Allowance and Fees

Foster Parents receive a weekly payment for each child they foster which is divided into a childcare allowance that covers the living costs of caring for a child, including the cost of food, local travel, additional utility costs, clothes, school uniform, school trips, leisure activities, family outings and holidays; and a fostering fee, the income you receive for your role as a foster parent.

Your fostering payments may vary depending on the age of the child or due to contractual variations. This will be discussed with you prior to the commencement of any foster child coming to live with you.

Review of Fostering Allowance and Fees

The recommended children's allowance is reviewed by the government each year. Mosaic Foster Care will match the government recommended allowance for covering the cost of caring for children. Your fostering fee is reviewed by Mosaic Foster Care each year, any increase in this fee will generally be small as the fees paid by placing authorities remain fixed for the duration of your child's foster placement and in most instances are reduced due to long-term placement discounts.

Travel Expenses

Foster Parents may also claim back expenses directly related to the fostering task, i.e., those costs which they would not incur unless they were fostering. This may include transporting children to meetings, appointments, or family contacts, and may also include other travel such as attending training or fostering events. It will not include the items listed in the paragraph above, such as grocery shopping, as you would be doing this irrespective of whether you foster. Therefore, you should only reclaim expenses for fostering related tasks. There will also be a deduction of £20 per week from your expenses to cover local travel claims such as school runs, medical appointments, etc, which are a reasonable expectation of foster parents and already included in your child allowance payment.

Mileage Claims and Payment Reviews

You are currently entitled to claim 45p per mile for your first 10,000 miles of travel per year and 25p per mile thereafter. This is the maximum "approved amount" set by the government. Anything above this amount would need to be added to your pay, subjected to tax, and accordingly reported to HMRC.

Support and Activities

As a generally rule you will be expected to make a contribution toward the cost of your child's activity, food, or drink while they are out on a group or 1:1 activity with support staff, unless otherwise informed e.g., the summer BBQ. Therefore, you should plan and agree what activities

your child will be doing with their support working in advance, ideally at the end of each activity in preparation for the next session. You will not be expected to cover any costs pertaining to the support workers, as this is covered by Mosaic Foster Care.

Supportive Foster Care (SFC)

As part of your support package, you will also receive up to three weeks paid supportive foster care (holiday) per year. However, this will only comprise of your fostering fee, not the childcare allowance, as the child will not be staying with you at this time. The foster parent providing SFC will receive their full fostering fee plus a partial daily childcare allowance (as they will not have full childcare costs such as buying clothing). This is generally to cover the costs of food, activities, and local travel. The daily childcare allowance will be reviewed each year once set by the government as outlined above.

Insurance

As a foster parent, you will need to make sure that your house, contents, and car insurance providers are aware that you foster and discuss with them the type of fostering that you do. They will be able to help you determine which changes of household circumstances you will need to continue to inform them about. Check with them what is covered in the policy in relation to your role as a foster parent.

If your home, car, or contents are damaged through your role as a foster parent we would expect you to claim through your insurance company as you would for any other claim. Let your supervising social worker and the child's social worker know what has happened and the progress of your claim and keep any documentation in relation to the damage and the claim.

If your insurance company reject your claim, please let us know and we may be able to provide you with guidance or support through our own insurance services.

Clothing

Your Fostering Allowance payment covers the cost of clothing on an ongoing basis, including school uniform and school equipment. If a child arrives with you with very limited clothing you will need to discuss this with the child's social worker and your supervising social worker, where in exceptional circumstances an emergency payment may be made.

Children Looked After have told us that it's really important to their sense of value to feel that they have similar trendy clothing to birth children and their friends. Foster parents need to be aware with teenagers of the need to provide some more expensive and trendy items.

Equipment

You will be expected to provide age-appropriate toys and activities for children in your care. Special toys and sometimes bedding should move with children and can help a positive transition to their new home.