

TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUMMARY OF FOSTER CARER PAYMENTS

April 2021 – March 2022

As an approved foster carer, you will be entitled to a weekly allowance for each child in your care, at a level consistent with the minimum allowances stipulated by Welsh Government. The fostering allowance relates to the age of the child or young person placed, and will be paid for each child or young person whilst they remain in your care.

Age Range	Fostering Allowance Weekly Rate £
0-4 years	£194
5-15 years	£177
16+ years	£220

You may also be eligible for a fee payment, if you meet the eligibility criteria, which includes demonstrating the skills and abilities to care for any child or young person the Local Authority matches with you. If you meet the eligibility criteria, you will be entitled to a placement fee for each child placed in your care.

Age Range	Fostering Allowance Weekly Rate £	Placement Fee Weekly Rate £	Total Weekly Payment
0-4 years	194	103.75	297.75
5-15 years	177	103.75	280.75
16+ years	220	103.75	323.75

A limited number of foster carers are also approved as specialist therapeutic carers, these carers receive a weekly contractual payment, instead of the placement fee, in return for the additional responsibilities and skills which they have. More information about these schemes are available from the Family Placement Team.

Payments are made on a fortnightly basis – monies will be transferred directly into your bank account, usually on alternate Tuesdays.

The Welsh Government has provided some guidance in relation to the expenses of caring for a foster child, which would normally be covered by the fostering allowance. The expenses that foster carers are expected to be responsible for are explained in detail below. If you have any queries about what you are expected to pay for then you should request more information from your allocated supervising worker, who will be able to advise you.

The Fostering Allowance is intended to cover the cost of the following:

- Clothing, including sports and leisure wear for general activities, and replacement of school uniform,
- Food, including lunch at school and including most special dietary requirements.
- School trips and family contact days.
- Cultural and religious needs.
- Pocket money, must be in line with Foster Carer Pocket Money Guidance and other presents for friends and family – as agreed with social worker, up to an agreed total cost.
- A reasonable level of 'phone calls to friends, family members, social care etc, including mobile 'phone top ups/credit.
- Toiletries, hair care and skin care products,
- General day-to-day travel, within a 20 mile radius, including to and from school, educational appointments, routine health care appointments, and leisure activities. The allowance also covers contact visits, which remains within what would be thought reasonable for a biological family.
- Costs associated with general leisure and recreational activities, including materials.
- School outings/visits in line with the National Curriculum.
- Cost of accompanying the foster family on holidays in UK or abroad, outings, day trips etc.
- General wear and tear of the home.
- Purchase and replacement of general home furnishings (*such as bedding, linen and blinds*), toys and small baby-related items (*such as sterilisers, bottles, change mats, baby baths etc.*).
- Appropriate care of the child including general day care or other childcare arrangements, unless a particular arrangement is specified and agreed in advance as an exceptional cost.
- Any other day-to-day costs related to the needs of the child/young person placed, unless specified and agreed as an exceptional cost.

Please note, that unless it has been agreed in advance, the Family Placement Team will be unable to reimburse payments made by carers for items purchased themselves.

Exceptional Payments

Exceptional payments may be made where it is not reasonable for a foster carer to cover the whole expense from their weekly fostering allowance. This may include some leisure, social or educational pursuits that are particularly costly, but which are viewed as important for the child's social development.

Any exceptional payment must be agreed by the relevant Group Manager and will be noted in the Individual Placement Agreement, which will also show how and when this payment will be made, and any arrangements for review. Approval for any exceptional payment must be requested and obtained in advance.

Advance Fostering Allowance

An advance payment of £60 per child/young person may be made in cash when a new placement is made, if this would be helpful. This will be noted on the Individual Placement Agreement. The sum paid in advance will be deducted from the first scheduled payment of the fostering allowance, following the start of this placement.

Travel and Mileage Costs

Irrespective of how the journey is taken, the fostering allowance includes travel to and from school, medical appointments, leisure activities, family contact within a 20 mile radius.

Outside of the 20 mile radius, the mileage allowance will be paid at 0.45p per mile, if you are using your own vehicle.

Expenses should be submitted on a monthly basis and any claims submitted more than 3 months, after the cost has been incurred, will not be paid.

Respite Foster Care

Respite foster care will be provided for the child/young person in placement, with the agreement of the child's social worker and your Supervising Worker, either in accordance with the child's care plan, or for purposes of help and support to the foster carer. Details of any regular respite arrangement will be noted in the Individual Placement Agreement, and any ongoing arrangement will be subject to regular review. Any arrangement involving respite foster care for the child/young person placed with you must always be approved well in advance.

Respite Foster Payments

Respite Carer – The nightly payments that will be made to carers providing respite care are shown below. The payment to respite carers will include both the fostering allowance and the placement fee elements. If respite is for 7 nights the weekly fostering allowance and family placement rates detailed on page 1 will apply. Payments for respite foster care are made in arrears. Respite allowances include an element for any travel costs incurred when collecting/returning the child/young person in placement.

Age Range	Fostering Allowance Rate £	Placement Fee Rate £	PAYMENT PER NIGHT £
0–4 years	27.71	14.82	42.53
5–15 years	25.29	14.82	40.11
16+ years	31.43	14.82	46.25

Main Carer

Any financial support provided by the local authority must complement and not duplicate any other financial support being provided for the child.

When respite is provided as part of the Care and Support Plan for the child, to prevent placement breakdown or assist a fragile placement, the Fee element would still be paid to the main carer (if they meet the eligibility criteria), however, the Fostering Allowance would move with the child/young person.

The *Fostering Allowance* element of the weekly fostering payment will not be paid to the main carer whilst the child/young person is not living with them.

As the main foster carer is usually paid in advance, it is likely that there will be a correction to the payments made to the main carer after the period of respite ends.

Provision of Day Care

On occasions when foster carers may need the children/young people placed with them to be looked after for a few hours, an appropriate adult or family member, who is well known to the foster carer and trusted by them, would usually be suitable – this should be discussed with your Supervising Worker. For longer periods, or regular arrangements, the person will need to have a DBS check. Carers would usually be expected to make any payments they may feel are appropriate for this short period of care themselves.

In certain circumstances, day care may be provided with another foster carer, who will be paid for this session. This arrangement would need to have the prior agreement of the child's social worker and your Supervising Worker. Examples of situations where day care may be approved might be: attendance at foster carer training or a hospital appointment, where no one suitable can be identified to look after the child, or where a planning meeting for the child concerned has identified the need for respite day care. Any arrangement must be agreed in advance and will be approved on a one-off, individual basis.

Payment to Foster Carers Providing Day Care

This payment is made to cover expenses connected to the care of the child/young person who is being looked after by approved Torfaen foster carers for sessions during the day time. Day care is paid at £4.52 per whole hour, a maximum of 8hrs is payable per day.

Religious Festival Allowances –

Religious festival allowance is paid to foster carers in addition to the weekly fostering allowance. The religious/celebration allowance is equivalent to one week's age related allowance. These allowances will be paid in December to allow sufficient time for the purchase of presents and other celebratory items.

Taxi

Taxis will only be used when there is no other safe or timely alternative. However, if this is the main form of transport used by a child and is part of the Care and Support Plan, then consideration will be given to deducting the transport element of the fostering allowance as the foster carer is not providing transport. Otherwise they are not being treated equally with carers who are spending their travel allowance on travel costs.

Initial clothing

When a child enters a new placement with insufficient clothing, following a discussion with the Social Worker, an initial clothing allowance will be granted. This is classed as an exceptional payment, please see above.

Placement disruption

In the event that a placement ends, any over payments made will be reclaimed

For payments specific to child and parent placement please see Parent and Child Policy