



**TIME OUT**  
fostering  
*valuing individual needs*

## SECTION SIX

# FOSTER CARER PAYMENTS & ALLOWANCES

2007

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### Allowances

Time Out Fostering values carers as professional colleagues, working as part of a team to promote the best outcomes for children and young people. They are expected to undertake training courses and continually seek to develop their skills. The allowance paid by the agency is expected to cover the full cost of caring for each foster child to the high standards expected by the agency, and provides a reward element that recognises the skills and commitment required from Time Out Fostering carers. Time Out Fostering believes foster children should receive the essentials of modern life. Allowances are related to the type of fostering placement (traditional or support care) but are not related to the age of the child.

It is expected that the level of the allowance paid is sufficient to provide an appropriate and nutritious diet, together with the provision of adequate clothing, shoes and personal requisites for the child. An additional clothing grant may be paid in exceptional circumstances, e.g. If a child has very limited clothing at placement or if school uniform is exceptionally expensive. The carer, agency and placing social worker should liaise before placement or as soon as an issue is identified. The allowance covers food, clothing, pocket money, a proportion of the household bills, personal items, transport & holidays. More details can be found in the advice on Foster Carer Payments, Personal Expenses Allowances and Holidays.

Foster Carers are classed as Self Employed people and as such will receive an Annual Summary of Fees and Allowances upon which to base their Income Tax Returns. Foster carers may wish to pursue additional benefits such as tax relief and tax credits as appropriate.

## Foster Carer Payments

Foster Carers are paid on a fortnightly basis. Payments are made in arrears on the second and last Friday of the month. Payments are made directly into the carer's bank account and carers will receive an advice of payment within a week. Additional expenses should be claimed on the appropriate form, and will be authorised by the Supervising Social worker before payment. Carers should supply Time Out Fostering with their relevant bank details when accepting their first foster child into the family, and ensure that any changes are notified to Time Out Fostering promptly to ensure prompt payment.

### Payments include allowances for:

A proportion of the household expenses, clothing, all food, pocket money and Local travelling costs, e.g. within 20 miles for school, therapy, contact visits, etc.

Additional mileage agreed in advance by the Supervising Social Worker will be paid at a rate of 25p per mile.

Trips and activities

Routine dental/optical examination and treatment including glasses

Foster carers are expected to budget from their weekly allowance to provide an annual holiday costing up to £300 for each child. If the family is planning a more expensive holiday the Local Authority may be asked to contribute to the cost.

Foster carers are expected to budget for birthdays and Christmas expenses appropriate to the needs of the child or young person and the expectations within the family. If the child has been staying with you for less than 2 months foster carers may request additional allowances.

### Suggested allowances

Age of child	Pocket money	Clothing allowance
0-3	£1.25	£10.00
4-7	£2.00	£10.00
8-10	£2.30	£10.00
11-12	£3.80	£15.00
13	£7.00	£15.00
14	£8.70	£15.00
15	£10.40	£15.00
16+	£12.10	£25.00

These allowances are negotiable and should be discussed at the initial placement meeting and reviewed. Any money not given to the LAC should be put into a savings account for the child this should be recorded in the sheets provided.

### Personal Expenses Allowance

The personal expenses element included in the Fostering Allowance is not merely pocket money and clothing allowance. It is expected to cover other items such as

deodorants, toothpaste, sanitary towels, shaving gear, dry cleaning, personal telephone calls, youth activity fees, comics, sweets, ice creams, treats, and the many items that are essentials of modern life for young people.

Some households will continue to supply many items as part of the weekly shop or from the general housekeeping pool. There needs to be some discussion at the outset of the placement about how much of the personal expenses element is paid to the carer and how much to the young person as pocket money.

Time Out Fostering does not set prescribed amounts of pocket money, preferring to allow the foster carer to set the appropriate amount in discussion with the placing Social Worker and Supervising Social Worker. However this should be near to the suggested amounts.

Each Local Authority will have its own guidance rates for payments of pocket money and clothing, but there needs to be an element of equality between the foster carer's own children and any children placed.

These rates will need to be reviewed annually to reflect the young person's ability to take responsibility and their need to move towards independence. It should therefore be clearly recorded if the pocket money covers specific elements included in the personal expenses allowance. The amount of pocket money paid to young people should be realistic. Time Out Fostering believes that the amount should not exceed the element for personal needs within any benefit payment a young person could expect if they were unemployed. This is important because it is the responsibility of both social workers and foster carers to help ensure a smooth transition to independent living after foster care. It would be unhelpful if a young person expected a lifestyle that was much higher than he/she could sustain on a limited income.

Where there is a belief that unsupervised spending of pocket money could lead to an element of risk for a young person (e.g. the purchase of solvents, drugs or alcohol, smoking under age, absconding), then foster carers may wish to accompany the young person when they are spending their pocket money. Foster carers should record and inform their Supervising Social Worker if they feel they have to supervise/restrict the spending of pocket money. Any outstanding payment not paid to the child or young person should be paid into his/her bank account.

Temporarily withholding a proportion of a young person's pocket money is permitted, but this must be returned in cash or kind at an agreed time. For instance, a young person could earn back some of their pocket money or the money could be saved for them. This should be recorded.

## **Clothing**

The allowance paid to carers includes an amount to cover the cost of clothing the young person in their care. Foster carers are expected to clothe the child to an appropriate standard for their age and cultural needs. Clothing should enable young people to feel part of their appropriate social group, but take into account their needs to learn to budget realistically. Outgrown and worn clothing should be replaced from this allowance.

The recommended weekly amount for the child should be discussed and agreed by the Carer, Placing Social Worker and Supervising Social Worker and recorded in the Placement Agreement. This should be reviewed annually.

At the commencement of the placement, if the child/young person has not got adequate clothing, an additional clothing grant may be requested from the Placing Authority. This amount will be agreed by the Placing Authority Social Worker and recorded in the Placement Agreement.

Carers should retain receipts for clothing purchased for foster children and clear records should be kept on expenditures on the sheets provided. These records should be made available to the Supervising Social Worker and will be checked on a regular basis.

Additional grants may be made in exceptional circumstances. For example, when school uniform is more than usually expensive. Agreement for this should be made by the Supervising Social Worker before purchase.

The pocket money and clothing allowance forms will be provided prior to a placement. They can be filled in electronically or by hand.

### **Respite Policy – Start Date 1<sup>st</sup> August 07**

Foster cares are entitled to 14 days respite payments each year. Carers will receive two payments, one at the end of January 2008 and one at the end of July 2008 to provide additional funds for respite during each six month period. Payment will continue at the same times consecutively each year there after.

January's respite payment covers from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 07 to January 31<sup>st</sup> 08. July's payment covers from 1<sup>st</sup> of February 08 to the 31<sup>st</sup> July 08. Payment will continue for the same periods, consecutively each year there after.

This means that for each child that the foster carer has had in placement they will receive up to one weeks additional payment based on a pro rata basis depending on how long they have been fostering that child during that six month (26 weeks) period. If a foster carer had child 'A' in place for 13 weeks during that six month period and child 'B' for 26 weeks they would receive half a weeks additional payment for child 'A' and one weeks additional payment for child 'B'.

This means that if you foster for 52 weeks (1 year) you are entitled to two additional week's payment so will receive in total 54 weeks payment.

The number of weeks a child has been in placement is based on the number of whole weeks.

Payments will be paid based on the above information regardless of whether the foster carer has taken respite during that time.

Amount of payment will be calculated at the end of each six months at time of payment. If during this time a foster carer has had more than one weeks respite away from their foster child, and has continued to be paid for this period, any over payment will be adjusted in January and July and advice of this adjustment sent to the carer.

## **Additional information:**

### **Foster Children's holidays**

Carers are expected to budget for the cost of holidays out of the fortnightly payments they receive whilst the child is in placement.

### **Foster children's school trips**

Day trips will expect to be funded out of fortnightly payments. Funding for trips for longer periods of time will be looked at on an individual basis.

### **Playground / nursery fees**

Time Out Fostering must be contacted, and agree to the use of a playgroup/nursery before a foster child starts there. Your supervising social worker will assess the suitability of playgroup/nursery.

Funding must be agreed before a child is placed in a playgroup or nursery and will be looked at on an individual basis.