

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

FOSTER CARER 'PAYMENT FOR SKILLS' SCHEME

POLICY

CONTENTS

	Page No
1. Introduction to the Payment for Skills Policy	2
2. Aim of the Review of the Payment for Skills Scheme	2
3. Main changes of the Scheme	3
4. Outline of New Payment Scheme & Associated Allowances (from 1.6.14)	4
5. Level of 'Fee' Payment & Banding Framework (Table 1)	4
6. Banding Levels (Appendices)	5
7. Age Related Fostering Allowance (Table 2)	5
8. Tax & Benefits	5
9. Stability Payment	5
10. Retainer Arrangements	6
11. Respite Arrangements	7
 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
12. When Taking a Break	7
13. Summary of Transitional Arrangements	8
14. Expenses	9
a) Travel	
b) Equipment	
15. Complaints Process	9
 APPENDICES	
1. Banding Level 1	10
2. Banding Level 2	12
3. Banding Level 3	14
4. Banding Level 4	17
5. Limited Resources Guidance	21
6. Foster Carer Equipment	22

1. Introduction to the Payment for Skills Policy

This document has been produced following a review of the payment framework for foster carers. It sets out the revised level of payments and banding criteria which was implemented from 1st June, 2014.

The review built on the original policy for payment for skills, which linked the level of payments to:-

- The foster carer's experience of the fostering task
- Training the foster carer has completed and qualifications they have received
- The range of the fostering tasks the foster carer was willing and able to undertake

This Scheme, which was implemented from September 2000, accepted the need to introduce a reward payment arrangement for foster care, as stipulated in the UK National Standards for Foster Care 1999. The review of the Scheme also complied with the further requirements of Standard 28 National Minimum Standards 2011.

In addition, it took into account the 'sufficiency duty' which was placed on Local Authorities under Section 22 (G) Children Act 1989 (effective from April 2011) to secure sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of their looked after children and young people. Local Authorities are legally responsible for the well-being of all Looked After Children and they need to find the best fostering placements for children and young people who cannot live with their families.

The Authority's ability to recruit and retain good foster carers is central to its compliance with those duties.

2. Aim of the review of the Payment for Skills Scheme

- To provide choice in high quality, in-house, child-centred family placements for children, ensuring safety, stability and positive outcomes for them.
- To recruit and retain skilled foster carers.
- To provide a clear, fair, consistent framework for all carers.
- To provide motivation for the continued personal development and training of carers.
- To promote the delegation of authority to foster carers.
- To develop a wide range of placement options for looked after children.
- To ensure Payment for Skills framework is compatible with the current financial situation

The aim of the Scheme was therefore, to provide a range of quality foster carers who deliver a wide choice of placement options to meet the needs of

Looked After Children and Young People in Durham. It also recognised the need for appropriate remuneration to competent and skilled carers, particularly in the context of a competitive fostering market place.

The review of the Payment for Skills Scheme underpinned high quality care for Looked After Children and promoted the principles that:

- Children are securely attached to carers capable of providing safe and effective care.
- Children gain maximum life changing benefits from education opportunities, health care and social care.
- Young people leaving care, as they enter adulthood, are not isolated and participate socially and economically as citizens.
- Service users gain maximum benefit from services available, and to demonstrate the effectiveness and value for money of the care provided, allowing for choice and different responses for different needs and circumstances.

3. Main changes of the Scheme

The Scheme sets out the following new arrangements:

- The introduction of new banding levels and criteria 1- 4;
- The ending of the current 'fee payment' for holiday provision and replacing this with 'Placement Stability Payment' – 14 days per FC household (see eligibility criteria below);
- The introduction of a staggered payment structure for retainer 'fee payments'.

Foster carers will continue to receive:

- A weekly Age-Related Fostering Allowance, paid for each child, placed with a Foster Carer, as stipulated by the Department of Education;
- An additional 2 week Age-Related Fostering Allowance per child at both Summer and Christmas periods.

Foster carers assessed at Levels 2, 3 and 4 will also receive an additional weekly fee payment for each child placed. These levels will be determined through the Assessment or Annual Foster Carer Review processes.

The assessment level will be determined by evidence of the carer's:

- Experience of fostering;
- Appropriate training completed and qualifications achieved;
- Range of fostering tasks Foster Carers are willing and able to undertake in respect of children with more complex needs.

4. Outline of New Payment Scheme & Associated Allowances (from 1.6.14)

The 'Payment for Skills' Scheme provides all foster carers, whether they are Relative Carers, Short-Term, Permanence or Respite Carers, with a career structure and the opportunity to acquire further training and skills to progress through the bandings and meet the needs of looked after children in foster care.

Tables 1 & 2 set out the weekly 'Fee' Payment Framework and Age-Related Fostering Allowance.

TABLE 1

5. Level of 'Fee' Payment & Banding Framework

Banding	Level of Fees
Temp Approval	No Fees
Level 1	<p>No Fees After Form C Assessment and ADM Approval. A Decision will be made at the first FC Review re progression through bandings. A Full Form F Assessment will be completed if the decision is made to progress.</p>
Level 2	£ 50.05
Level 3	£160.02
Level 4	£235.41
Parent/Child	<p>Special Payment (Will depend upon mother's age and status of child):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If mother is 16 yrs she can claim benefits e.g. Income Support for herself. - If baby is 'not Looked After' mother can also claim child benefit and child tax credit. - If baby is 'Looked After' mother cannot claim benefits for child.
NB	<p>Should a foster carer not meet the required training/standards of their current banding level within the designated time period, he/she may drop down to the banding level below.</p>

6. Banding Levels

The following Banding Level criteria are attached as Appendices to this Policy.

- Banding Level 1 – Appendix 1
- Banding Level 2 – Appendix 2
- Banding Level 3 – Appendix 3
- Banding Level 4 – Appendix 4

TABLE 2

7. Age Related Fostering Allowance (ARFA)

Age	Allowance
0 – 4 yrs	£126.00
5 – 10 yrs	£139.02
11 – 15 yrs	£159.04
16+ yrs	£185.01

8. Tax and Benefits

Fee paid Foster Carers must register with the HMRC as self-employed and notify the Tax Office if they receive payments above the fostering threshold. It is also the foster carer's responsibility to check the impact that any fostering payment will have on any benefits they receive. The HMRC website and Fostering Network have excellent advice on this.

Foster carers are provided with an Annual Statement of payments at the end of each financial year.

9. Stability Payment

This payment is to promote the stability of placements for children and young people. Holiday payments are no longer payable.

Foster carers will receive a stability payment at levels 2, 3 and 4, equivalent to 2 weeks fee payment per foster carer household at the end of the financial year, where they have demonstrated placement stability for children, subject to the following criteria:

- This payment will be paid to a fostering household who have undertaken a short-term/permanent placement for at least 6 months within the financial year.

- New foster carers approved during the financial year will not receive payment unless they meet the criteria set out above i.e. placements for at least 6 months during the financial year.
- Foster carers who resign during the year will forfeit their stability payment.
- Stability payment will not be made to solely EDT/Respite Foster Carers.
- Foster carers will continue to receive an additional two weeks Age-Related Fostering Allowance per child in placement during the Summer and Christmas periods in line with DfE Guidance.
- The Stability Payment will be lost if carers have more than 21 nights holiday/respice **where children and young people are placed elsewhere**, either with other carers or using their support network.

10. Retainer Arrangements

These will be paid on a staggered basis, as outlined below, for all carers where the carer is available and has a vacancy.

Duration of Placement (up to 7 nights)	- 1 night retainer paid
Duration of Placement (7 nights to 12 weeks)	- 7 nights retainer paid
Duration of Placement (over 12 weeks)	- 28 days retainer paid

All placements will be paid under the staggered retainer rule with the exception of EDT/Respite placements which will not attract a retainer.

If a foster carer goes on holiday immediately after a placement ceases, the retainer will commence once the foster carer returns from holiday and is available to take a placement. Continuation of the retainer payment will only be made where a foster carer has taken no more than 15 nights break at the end of the placement.

A retainer payment will not be made where a foster carer does not work the full 28 days' notice period. The full 28 days' period of notice must be received in writing and can only be accepted following discussion and agreement in a formal Care Team Meeting and with the agreement of the Managers.

In exceptional circumstances, where the 28 days' notice period has not been worked, for a reason agreed by the Operations Manager, then a retainer may be payable.

In addition, where there is a disruption to the placement and it is not the fault of the Foster Carer a further retainer can be applied at the discretion of the Operations Manager. However where there is an allegation against the Foster Carer and an investigation is to be carried out, the outcome of which is the fault of the Foster Carer and the child cannot be returned to their care, no retainer will be paid at the end of this period.

Foster Carers with vacancies are expected to consider all requests for placements, which fall within their terms of approval and which are considered to be reasonable, given all the information and appropriate matching. Situations where foster carers refuse to accept appropriate placements during

their retainer period will be addressed by the Limited Resources Guidance e.g. foster carers who refuse appropriately- matched placements will forfeit their retainers and may trigger an early review to consider the appropriateness of their terms of approval. (See Appendix 5)

11. Respite Arrangements

Durham County Council recognises the demands placed upon foster carers. It also recognises that placement stability and continuity are crucial to the emotional wellbeing and future development of foster children.

Respite provision will therefore be provided in the following circumstances and **must be agreed** within Placement Planning Meetings or Care Team Meetings and with Managers:

- Where support is required to maintain placements for those children with the most complex needs consistent with the child's Care Plan.
- Where additional support is required, to a placement which becomes fragile and is at risk of disruption.

Respite provision may also be provided to:

- Maintain placements when emergencies and unforeseen circumstances arise e.g. illness of carer or immediate family member.

Provision of respite to support placements in the above circumstances will not impact upon a Stability Payment.

Foster Carers will be encouraged to use their Support Network to provide this support.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

12. When Taking a Break

Under the new payments system, Foster Carers who have time away without their young person, and alternative respite provision is requested, will not receive the Fee or Fostering Allowance during this period. The exception to this would be if carers were to use their own family support network, in which case the Fee and Fostering Allowance would still be paid to the main carer, who will then make appropriate arrangements to pay their support carer.

Where a Foster Carer requests to take a holiday without the foster children and requires respite via an alternative foster placement (other than the circumstances identified above) no payments will be made. Any break will need to be:

- Planned in advance with at least 28 days' notice;
- Agreed by Fostering Team Manager/Care Team.

There may be exceptional circumstances where alternative placements are requested, due to unforeseen circumstances arising e.g. illness of foster carer or immediate family member. Whilst respite provision will be provided, payments to the main foster carer will cease.

When respite is provided as part of the Care Plan for the child, to prevent placement breakdown or assist a fragile placement, the Fee element would still be paid to the main carer, however, the Fostering Allowance would move with the young person.

The child's Social Worker, Team Manager and Care Team will make decisions to agree respite where it is consistent with the needs of the child and to maintain the placement e.g. for a child who has very complex needs and disabilities. It will not be in the interests of the majority of children and young people.

It is expected that Foster Carers will identify a 'Support Network' to provide this support wherever possible and must always seek approval about such arrangements from a Fostering Social Worker and child's Social worker on each occasion.

In all cases, children permanently placed with carers should stay with someone who is well known to them and preferably remain within their own foster home.

In accordance with the Foster Care Agreement the Foster Carer(s) must ensure that the Local Authority (child's Social Worker and Fostering Social Worker) are aware of the location of the child for all overnight stays away from the primary Foster Carer's home.

13. Summary of Transitional Arrangements

Band C - (Level 2)

Carers currently on Band C will have their fee protected for two years from 1st June 2014 unless they progress to Level 3.

Band D - (Level 4)

Foster Carers who are due a Foster Carer Review between 1st June 2014 and 30th November 2014 will automatically transfer to Level 4, providing they meet the criteria for Band D. However, any areas where they are not meeting Level 4 will be highlighted and an Action Plan will be developed to ensure Foster Carers meet these by the date of their next Review.

Band E - (Level 4)

Foster carers currently on Band E will have their fee protected for two years from 1st June 2014, unless their approval is changed to enable them to take two or more children and as such their protection payment will immediately cease. For example, Foster Carers who change their terms of approval will be eligible to a Level 4 fee payment per placement.

14. Expenses

Travel

Expenses totalling 35 miles per week are incorporated in the Fostering Allowance Payment for each child and will therefore be deducted from Foster Carer mileage claims. Foster Carers will be paid at the rate of 38p per mile for journeys undertaken solely for the benefit of the foster child or reimbursement for attendance at training events.

Equipment

Foster carers who do not have the appropriate furniture/equipment or require replacements may be eligible for the loan of items listed on the attached Appendix 6. Agreement must be sought at the appropriate Finance Panel to purchase these items and from Operations/Team Manager for emergency placements.

15. Complaints Process

If you have any queries or concerns relating to the complaints process in Children and Adults Services, please contact the Children and Adults Services Complaints Team via email to CASComplaints@durham.gov.uk or by phone to 03000 265762 or 03000 266855.

**Level 1
Name of Carer:**

This agreement must be shared with, and signed by, the relevant parties prior to approval/re-approval.

Portfolio evidence, together with other information presented to the Fostering Panel for approval, or, for the annual foster carer review, will be used to reach a recommendation about the carer's suitability to act as a Level 1 carer or progression to a higher banding level.

Criteria
<p>Agency Decision Maker Approval of assessment</p> <p>Temporary approved carers with children placed under Regulation 24 or 25 or Forms F or C completed and approved by fostering panel.</p>
<p>Carer availability: The carer fully supports any child in placement during times of difficulty without any implications on the care of the child or their obligations as a foster carer.</p> <p>In Practice this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide care before and after school and at all times for pre-school children. • Provide care with appropriate support for the child if the child is sick or excluded from school. • Able to provide suitable care during all school holidays and if necessary through agreed support care arrangements. • Willing to accompany the child to education, medical dental, opticians, and therapeutic appointments. • Available to attend meetings and conferences with support. • Available for regular visits by social worker, fostering social worker and other professionals during normal working hours.
<p>Placement criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be willing and able to take placements of children matched with them in line with the child/ren's Care Plan/ or preferred terms of approval. • Understand the implications of delegated authority.
<p>Contact for children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be available before and after contact to support the child.

Professional development requirements:

- Have completed the TSDS standards, or plan to complete the standards within 24 months if a connected person, 12 months if mainstream carer.
- Have completed the training identified for them in line with their personal development plan.
- Attend a minimum of 1 development session per year. This can include support groups, foster carer's consultation meetings and training.

Recording requirements:

- Evidence the completion of daily factual recording on each child.
- Contribute to children's Looked After Reviews, Child Protection Conferences and any other meeting relating to the child
- Contribute to life story work
- Evidence for the review the positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given

Other requirements:

- Any carer who does not fulfil the criteria of this level by the time of their annual Foster Carer Review will require an assessment of their suitability to continue as a foster carer.

Signed:

Fostering Social Worker: Date:

Foster Carer: Date:

Foster Carer: Date:

Decision and comments of Fostering Team Manager:

.....

.....

.....

Signed:

Manager: Date:

**Level 2
Name of Carer:**

This agreement must be shared with and signed by, the relevant parties prior to approval/review of approval as foster carers.

Portfolio evidence, together with other reports and documents presented to the annual foster carer review, will be used to reach a recommendation about the carer's suitability to act as a Level 2 Carer.

Level 2 carers must demonstrate commitment to their continued development.

Criteria
<p>Form F or Form C approved by Panel</p>
<p>Carer Availability: The carer fully supports any child in placement during times of difficulty without any implications on the care of the child or their obligations as a foster carer.</p> <p>In Practice this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be available before and after school or at all times for pre-school children • Enable support to transport the child to and from school. • Able to be at home to care for the child if the child is sick or excluded from school with appropriate support. • Able to provide suitable care during all school holidays. • Able to accompany the child to education, medical, dental, opticians and therapeutic appointments. • Available to attend meetings, conferences. • Available for regular visits by social worker, fostering social worker and other professionals during normal working hours.
<p>Placement criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be willing and able to take placements of children matched with them in line with the Child/ren's Care Plan/ or preferred terms of approval. • Understand the implications of delegated authority.
<p>Contact for children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be available before and after contact to support the child.

Professional development requirements:

- Both carers to have completed preparation training.
- Have completed the TSDS standards, or plan to complete the standards within 12 months if direct entry.
- Have completed their mandatory and other identified training and core training to be completed within 3 years.
- Ensure that their Personal Development Plan is completed annually.
- Attend a minimum of 2 development sessions per year. This can include support groups, foster carer’s consultation meetings and training. A minimum of 1 session must be a taught course.

Recording requirements:

- Evidence the completion of daily factual recording on each child.
- Contribute to providing written reports for example children’s Looked After Reviews and for Child Protection Conferences.
- Contribute to on-going life story work
- Complete the foster carer’s portfolio evidencing the positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given.

Other requirements:

- Carers must give a minimum of 28 days notice following a planning meeting decision to end the placement.
- Any carer, who does not fulfil their criteria of their current level by the time of their annual Foster Carer Review, will move to a level which accurately reflects their skills.

Signed:

Fostering Social Worker: Date:

Foster Carer: Date:

Foster Carer: Date:

Decision and comments of Fostering Team Manager:

.....
.....
.....

Signed:

Manager: Date:

Level 3
Name of Carer:

This agreement must be shared with and signed by, the relevant parties prior to approval/review of approval as foster carers.

Portfolio evidence, together with other reports and documentation presented to the annual foster carer review, will be used to reach a recommendation about the carer's suitability to act as a Level 3 Carer.

Level 3 carers must demonstrate commitment to their continued development.

Criteria
Form F approved by Panel
<p>Carer Availability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering is the primary occupation of one carer within the household. There is 24 hour care available in the home. It may be possible for carer/carers to have work commitments as long as one carer is available at all times when required. • The carer fully supports any child in placement during times of difficulty without any implications on the care of the child or their obligations as a foster carer. <p>In Practice this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to manage the stresses of employment outside the home and fostering 24/7 i.e. the emotional impact of fostering. • Be available before and after school or at all times for pre-school children. • Able to support transporting the child to and from school. • Able to be at home to care for the child if the child is sick or excluded from school. • Able to provide suitable care during all school holidays. • Able to accompany the child to education, medical, dental, opticians and therapeutic appointments. • Able to support contact/ be available before and after contact. • Available to attend meetings, conferences. • Available for regular visits by social worker, fostering social worker and other professionals during normal working hours. • Have completed preparation training. Able to attend induction training, identified training, complete the TSDDS. • For carers who wish to progress to Level 4 they must have completed either the Child Care certificate or Diploma within 12 months of moving to Level 4. • Have in place a robust support network to assist in an emergency situation. • Any agreed respite care should preferably be provided within the carer's own support network to ensure minimum disruption for the child where appropriate.

Placement criteria:

- Be willing and able to take placements of children within their preferred terms of approval dependent on the match with children already in placement.
- If no foster children in placement be willing and available to take emergency placements through the Placement Management Service.
- Be willing and able to take placements from the EDT when appropriate.
- Be confident in the execution of delegated authority.
- Be willing and able to manage children and young people and their circumstances which could potentially present a cluster of behaviours of which the carers have been assessed to be able to manage.

Contact for children

- Willing and able to supervise contact when deemed appropriate to do so in conjunction with the child's Care Plan.
- Be confident in promoting contact with siblings in conjunction with the child's Care Plan.
- Willing and able to facilitate contact in carer's own home (if appropriate for the child) between parents/extended family friends and or siblings.
- Willing and able to support transport arrangements for contact.

Professional development requirements:

- Have completed fostering preparation training.
- Have completed the TSDS standards, or plan to complete the standards within 9 months if direct entry.
- Have completed, or if direct entry be registered for the child care certificate/diploma in health and social care level 3 if applicable. (for carers who wish to progress to level 4 they must be willing to complete either the child care certificate or diploma within 12 months of moving to level 4).
- Have completed their mandatory and core training and ensure it is refreshed within time-scales. If direct entry core training to be completed within 2 years of approval.
- Ensure that their Personal Development Plan is completed annually.
- Attend a minimum of 6 development sessions per year. This can include support groups and or consultation sessions and or training sessions. A minimum of 2 sessions must be evidenced by attending training courses.
- In households where there are 2 carers, one carer must evidence all mandatory training and the second carers must evidence at least one training session which is not e-learning.

Recording requirements:

- Evidence the completion of daily factual recording on each child.
- Provide written reports relating to the child. This could include reports for Looked After Reviews, Child Protection Conferences and Child Permanent reports.
- Complete the portfolio to a high standard clearly evidencing the positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Ensure an on-going high standard of life story work.
- Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given.

Other requirements.

- Carers must give a minimum of 28 days' notice following a planning meeting decision to end the placement.
- Any carer, who does not fulfil their criteria of their current level by the time of their annual Foster Carer Review, will move to a level which accurately reflects their skills.

Signed:

Fostering Social Worker: Date:

Foster Carer: Date:

Foster Carer: Date:

Decision and comments of Fostering Team Manager:

.....
.....
.....

Signed:

Manager: Date:

Level 4
Name of Carer:

This agreement must be shared with and signed by, the relevant parties prior to approval/review of approval as foster carers.

Portfolio evidence, together with other reports and documents presented to the annual foster carer review, will be used to reach a recommendation about the carer's suitability to act as a Level 4 Carer.

Level 4 carers must demonstrate commitment to their continued development.

Criteria
<p>Form F approved by Panel</p> <p>Carer availability: Fostering is the primary occupation of one carer within the household. There is 24 hour care available in the home and opportunities for the whole family to share time together. It may be possible for carer/carers to have work commitments as long as they are flexible and one carer is available at all times when required. The carer fully supports any child in placement during times of difficulty without any implications on the care of the child or their obligations as a foster carer.</p> <p>In practice this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to manage the stresses of employment outside the home and fostering 24/7. i.e. the emotional impact of fostering. • Be available before and after school or at all times for pre-school children. • Able to support transporting the child to and from school • Able to be at home to care for the child if the child is sick or excluded from school • Available during all school holidays • Able to accompany the child to education, medical, dental, opticians and therapeutic appointments • Able to support contact/ be available before and after contact • Available to attend meetings, conferences, • Available for regular visits by social worker, fostering social worker and other professionals during normal working hours • Have completed preparation training. Able to attend induction training, identified training, complete the TSDS and either the Child Care certificate or Child Care Diploma. • Have in place a robust support network to assist in an emergency situation. • Any agreed respite care should preferably be provided within the carer's own support network to ensure minimum disruption for the child.
<p>Placement criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be willing and able to take placements of children within their preferred terms of approval dependent on the match with children already in placement. • If no foster children in placement be willing and available to take emergency

placements through the Placement Management Service

- Be willing and able to take placements from the EDT when appropriate.
- Whilst on a retainer, if appropriate, be willing to assist other carers who may require support to maintain the placement.
- Be confident in the execution of delegated authority.
- Be willing and able to manage children and young people with support, assessed as presenting a cluster of complex behaviours which cause management problems/challenges, or specific behaviours such as:
 - Sexualised behaviour
 - Self-harm
 - Soiling/enuresis
 - Offending behaviour
 - Non-school attendance
 - ADHD
 - Autistic spectrum disorder
 - Attachment difficulties
 - Missing from home
 - Fire setting
 - Substance withdrawal symptoms
 - Managing complex contact issues

Contact for children

- Willing and able to supervise contact when deemed appropriate to do so in conjunction with the child's Care Plan.
- Be confident in promoting contact with siblings in conjunction with the child's Care Plan.
- Willing and able to facilitate contact in carer's own home (if appropriate for the child) between parents/extended family/friends and or siblings.
- Able to support transport arrangements for contact.

Professional development requirements:

- Have completed Fostering Preparation Training
- Have completed the TSDS standards, or plan to complete the standards within 9 months if direct entry
- Have completed, or if direct entry be registered for the child care certificate/diploma if applicable and complete it within 12 months of the course commencing.
- Have completed their mandatory and core training and ensure it is refreshed within time-scales. If direct entry core training to be completed within 2 years of approval.
- Ensure that their Personal Development Plan is completed annually.
- Attend a minimum of 8 development sessions per year. This can include support groups and or consultation sessions and or training sessions. A minimum of 4 sessions must be evidenced by attending training courses.
- In households where there are 2 carers, one carer must evidence all mandatory training and the second carer must evidence 2 training courses one of which

can be e-learning, the other one a taught session.

Recording requirements:

- Evidence the completion of daily factual recording on each child.
- Provide written reports relating to the child. This could include reports for Looked After Reviews, Child Protection Conferences and Child Permanent reports.
- Complete the portfolio to a high standard clearly evidencing the positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Ensure an on-going high standard of life story work.
- Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given.

Specialist knowledge

Carers need to demonstrate competence, ability, skills and knowledge in at least one specialised area where they have developed expertise:

- Mother and baby.
- Work within the criminal justice system, including remand.
- Teenagers
- Sexual abuse working in conjunction with specialist services.
- Co-running/facilitating training and assist in recruitment processes.
- Meeting disabled children's specific needs.
- Court skills - including attendance and presentation of evidence if required.
- Life Story work.
- Moving children on to Permanence via adoption or permanent foster care or oversee rehabilitation back to birth family.
- Managing for large sibling groups.
- Caring for large sibling groups.
- Peer mentoring.
- Managing complex and high level (daily) contact.
- Managing young people who consistently go missing.
- Managing substance misuse.

This is not an exhaustive list and other specialisms can be considered. The knowledge and skills must be evidenced in the foster carers report for their annual review.

Other requirements.

- Carers must give a minimum of 28 days notice following a planning meeting decision to end the placement.
- Any carer, who does not fulfil their criteria of their current levels by the time of their annual Foster Carer Review, will move to a level which accurately reflects their skills.

Signed:

Fostering Social Worker: Date:

Foster Carer: Date:

Foster Carer: Date:

Decision and comments of Fostering Team Manager:

.....
.....
.....

Signed:

Manager: Date:

LIMITED RESOURCES GUIDANCE**Carer Availability**

Foster Carers with vacancies are expected to consider all requests for placements, which fall within their terms of approval and which are considered by the Fostering Service to be reasonable given all the available information and proper matching considerations.

Foster Carers may refuse a placement, however if a carer has refused **two placements** within their approval category, either a Foster Carer Review will be arranged to consider the carers' terms of approval and changed to suit what they feel able to offer, or the carers may be designated as a 'limited resource'.

The Fostering Service reserves the right to designate a Foster Carer as a 'limited resource' and suspend (retainer) fee payments until it is agreed that the carer is able to resume fostering in accordance with their approval.

If there is a disagreement between the Fostering Service and the Foster Carer about designating them as a 'limited resource' this will be dealt through an internal complaints procedure.

Foster Carer Equipment

Item	Price
Emergency Baby Placement Pack Consisting of:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solo Travel System • Cold Water Steriliser starter set • Moses Basket • Moses Basket Stand • Baby Bath • 2 Pram Blankets & 2 pairs Pram Sheets • 1 set of Clothing (3 Babygrows & 3 Vests) • Home Safety Starter Kit • Thermometer 	When making an emergency baby placement where the Carer has no equipment this is the equipment that should be allocated.
Solo Travel System	£199.99
Moses Basket	£35
Moses Basket/Bath Stand	£22
Steriliser starter set	£30
Baby Monitor (not routine – at Managers discretion)	£30
Cot	£110
Mattress 600mm x 1200mm	£50
Single Pushchair	£60
Double Pushchair – Cosatto inc. Rain Cover	£199
Double Pushchair – Umbrella Fold	£199
Double Pushchair – Tandem	£199
Fireguard	£26
Safety Gate (adjustable)	£22
Car Seat (9months – 4 years)	£110
Car Seat (0 – 6 months)	£40
Booster Cushion	£12
High Back Booster Seat 3 – 11 years	£45
Bath Thermometers	£2
Waterproof Sheets	£5
Single Bed Mattress (not routine – will only replace in certain circumstances)	£120
Mattress Protector	
Home Safety starter set Consisting of:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 Corner Cushions • Door Slam Stopper • 6 Drawer Locks • 2 Cabinet Slide Locks 	£8