



FOSTERING PAYMENTS 2025-2026

Payments to approved foster carers are made up of three main elements:

1. The first element is the basic age-related child allowance known as the maintenance allowance. The maintenance allowance is paid to all foster carers who care for a child in care to cover their day-to-day expenses.
2. The second element is the professional fee. This is also known as the skills payment and is paid to recognise foster carers' time, skills, training and experience.
3. The third element relates to the additional allowances paid to foster carers and include birthday, holiday and festival allowances. Other allowances are paid on a case-by-case basis.

Please note, full-time (mainstream and kinship) foster carers receive all three categories of payment. Part-time / short break foster carers will not receive the third element.

If you have any queries about allowances or if you think you have been under- or over-paid, contact the fostering business support finance team via email bcftbsproviderservicesfinance@bradfordcft.org.uk or phone Bev Greene on 07974 865154 or Rahila Malik on 07929 070308.

Payments to carers are made in arrears, every two weeks, direct to your bank or building society.

Payments to mainstream foster carers and kinship carers

This payment reflects the fact that high quality foster care is crucial in order to achieve better outcomes for children and young people. The amount paid as a maintenance allowance is guided by the UK government through the Department for Education (DfE). The DfE publishes guidance every year on the weekly maintenance allowance. DfE rates are based on the cost of living and are expected to cover the cost of caring for a child or young person in care.

Payments are made on a fortnightly basis, in arrears, directly into your bank account.

You should notify your supervising social worker (SSW) and the finance admin team (see contact details [above](#)) about any unplanned placement moves of your foster child to ensure that overpayments are minimised. Whilst future payments will be adjusted to recover overpayments, it is obviously in your interest to reduce the need for this.

Please note that Bradford Children & Families Trust will always seek re-imbursement of any monies that we have overpaid, which can include asking a debt collection company to follow up the outstanding amount. Equally, if you think you are being underpaid, it is important that you let us know so we can correct it.

Fostering maintenance allowances are paid depending on the age of the child and include money for clothing and day to day living; food, heating, normal transport to school, school activities, toiletries, hair/skin care and school dinners.

Weekly maintenance allowances 2025-26

Child's age	Total amount		Food	Clothing	Transport (miles)	Personal	Household
0-4	£176		£56.32	£45.76	£14.08 (37)	£10.56	£49.28
5-10	£194		£62.08	£50.44	£14.44 (38)	£15.52	£52.38
11-15	£220		£70.40	£57.20	£17.60 (46)	£13.20	£61.60
16-17	£258		£77.40	£67.08	£23.22 (61)	£43.86	£46.66

Weekly professional fees 2025-26

Unlike the DfE-recommended maintenance allowances, professional fees are not paid dependent on the age of the child. The professional fee paid to foster carers who are caring for more than one child is calculated by adding 50% of the fee for one child for each subsequent child cared for.

The professional fee is a payment based upon a tiered professional development programme, which allows carers to move between the tiers. Payments are made to foster carers depending on their progression, which is measured against the competency framework.

Fee Level	1 child	2 children	3 children
Entry Level	£124.44	£186.66	£248.88
Level 1	£183.72	£275.58	£367.44
Level 2	£260.20	£390.30	£520.40
Level 3	£370.40	£555.60	£740.80
Level 4	£596.84		

All new foster carers will receive Entry Level payments as a minimum.

Specialist foster carers (level 4)

Level 4 payments may extend to a range of specialist foster carers including Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) placements, Parent and Child parenting and family assessment placements, Mockingbird hub carers and foster carers for children and young people with complex needs who would otherwise be placed within therapeutic residential placements.

Other allowances

Foster for Bradford foster carers will receive additional allowances for the care of the children and young people they are looking after. The level of these payments is reviewed in March/April each year.

The other allowances include:

- An initial clothing grant of £70, if applicable to a child's situation when arriving in the foster carer's household. Please speak to your SSW about this.
- Life story work payment, which will need to be agreed by the child's social worker.
- A discretionary leaving grant for young people who are leaving a fostering household and setting up their own household. Please discuss with the Leaving Care team worker / manager involved.

Holiday allowance 2025-26

The holiday allowance is paid once a year in June for each child you foster. The amount paid depends on the age of the child or young person and is equivalent to two weeks' allowance.

Child's age	
0-4	£352
5-10	£388
11-15	£440
16-17	£516

Festival allowance 2025-26

The religious festival allowance is paid in November/December and is the equivalent of one week's allowance for each child you foster.

Birthday allowance 2025-26

The birthday allowance should be made with the payment you receive immediately before the date of the child's birthday and equivalent of one week's allowance.

Child's age	
0-4	£176
5-10	£194
11-15	£220
16-17	£258

Payments to part-time / short break foster carers 2025-26

Part-time / short break foster carers receive payments for each day or session of foster care provided, which are pro-rata of the weekly fee and the weekly allowance.

The short break fee is calculated at 1/7th of the weekly fee for each session/day of foster care provided. The short break allowance is calculated using 74% of the weekly allowance as the clothing element of the allowance has been removed and then 1/7th per session/day of foster care provided.

Sessional fostering allowance 2025-26 per child

Age	Daily allowance	Weekly allowance
0-4	£18.60	£130.24
5-10	£20.51	£143.56
11-15	£23.26	£162.80
16-17	£27.27	£190.92

Daily professional fee 2025-26

Fee Level	1 child	2 children	3 children
Entry Level	£17.77	£26.66	£35.55
Level 1	£26.25	£39.37	£52.49
Level 2	£37.17	£55.76	£74.34
Level 3	£52.91	£79.37	£105.83

Example: A level 2 short break carer providing a 2-day short break to an 11-year-old would receive 2 x daily allowance plus 2 x daily fee: (£23.26 x 2) + (£37.17 x 2). The carer's total payment for this placement would be £46.52 + £74.34 = £120.86.