



Foster for Nottinghamshire

giving local children **roots**

**foster
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Financial information and advice

for foster carers from April 2023 to March 2024



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

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Nottinghamshire foster carer allowances

Nottinghamshire County Council pays its foster carers basic fostering allowances per week, with the rates determined by the Department for Education.

Foster carers are self-employed, and any state benefits and your tax position are not usually affected, although you should inform benefits agencies and tax authorities that you are a foster carer – please see HMRC's Foster Care Relief fact sheet for more information.



1. Weekly allowances

Basic fostering allowances

All Nottinghamshire County Council mainstream foster carers receive a basic weekly allowance to provide for the average family cost of fully caring for a child, for example, accommodation, food, clothing, pocket money and sundry items such as books and play materials. This allowance is based on the age of the child and assumes that some minor additional costs are incurred through fostering activities.

Age of child	Basic fostering allowances
0-4	£154
5-10	£175
11-15	£217.78
16-17	£264.94

Recommended breakdown of basic fostering allowances

Age group	0-4	5-10	11-15	16-17
Food	£45	£50	£60	£70
Clothing	£35	£45	£50	£70
Transport (mileage)	£15	£15	£20	£25
Personal (pocket money, activities)	£14	£20	£40	£50
Household (contribution towards Council Tax, utility bills, usual wear and tear in household)	£45	£45	£47.78	£49.94
Total	£154	£175	£217.78	£264.94

Levels allowances

Levels allowances are extra payments in recognition of the additional skills, experiences and training that foster carers bring to placements over time.

These allowances give foster carers the chance to be acknowledged for their skills. As foster carers gain experience and develop their practice, they can progress through three levels.

Every foster carer has a supervising social worker who they work closely with to demonstrate that they meet the standards set out for each level. We offer training in many areas including child development, equality and diversity, managing children's behaviour, communicating with children and young people, working with birth families and helping children who have experienced abuse. Each new level pays an allowance, additional to the basic fostering allowance for each child or young person living in the foster home.



Level	Allowance
Level 1	basic fostering allowance plus £80 per week per child
Level 2	basic fostering allowance plus £130 per week per child
Level 3	basic fostering allowance plus £180 per week per child

Child-specific fostering allowances

Child-specific fostering is when we recruit or identify foster carers for children who are at risk of entering or who are stepping down from residential care. It can also occur when we identify a specific home with a foster carer to best meet a child's needs. Some children may have had several moves and present with developmental trauma or complex support needs, requiring a nurturing home environment to support them to thrive.

Experience of working with children and young people with complex emotional needs is desirable, although training and support is provided. Children are identified within regular meetings with representatives from looked after children, fostering and placements services, and specialist support services.

Foster carers for these children receive a bespoke financial and support package to meet the specific needs of a child, which is set out in a formal contract. Allowances for child-specific fostering usually start at £613 per week, with an allowance dependent upon the age of the child. Foster carers will not usually receive additional allowances outside of the agreed package of support. A retainer allowance may be payable to foster carers when a transition plan has been agreed.

Where a child-specific placement is agreed, the allowances would be as tabled:

Age group	Rate per week
0-4	£613
5-11	£619
12-15	£640.78
16-17	£657.94

Example for newly approved carer with a child-specific contract

Looked after child aged 0-4 on a child-specific contract

£613 per week

Monthly allowance £2,452

Fostering supplement

Foster carers will also receive a fostering supplement of £10 per week, per child, in addition to the basic fostering allowances and levels payments.

Savings

Within the basic fostering allowance, a component of this is a recommended minimum amount for savings. Savings accounts should be agreed as part of the placement planning between the child's social worker, the foster carers, the supervising social worker, and the child or young person where this is appropriate. There is an expectation that all children will leave care with some savings that reflects the amount of time they have been looked after. There should be discussion between the child's social worker, the foster carer, and the supervising social worker as to how savings will be kept and recorded. It is expected that all children will have a Junior ISA, a long-term, tax-free savings account and that the minimum amount of savings indicated in the allowance table is paid into their trust fund or Junior ISA account. Savings must travel with the child or young person in a timely manner when placement changes occur.

2. Annual festivities and birthday allowances

We also offer allowances to cover some of the extra costs associated with occasions such as birthdays. The birthday allowance will usually be paid three weeks prior to the child's birthday. The birthday allowance will be paid up to and including the young person's 18th birthday. The annual festivities allowance is paid in early December.

Age	Festivities and birthday allowances
1-4	£154
5-10	£175
11-15	£217.78
16-18	£264.94

3. Emergency clothing grant

When a child is placed with a foster carer, they may have insufficient or inappropriate clothing on arrival. In emergencies, you may be provided with a grant of £50, or up to £100 if required, for the child's immediate clothing needs. This is limited to the beginning of a placement only. Foster carers should retain receipts so that amounts can be reimbursed.





4. Annual holiday allowance

An annual holiday allowance will depend on the age of the child. It is paid once per financial year in addition to the basic fostering allowance. Foster carers do not have to be going on a holiday during the year to qualify for this allowance and should inform their child's social worker when they want it to be paid. It is normally paid for children fostered in bridging or long-term placements only and in certain circumstances may be paid pro-rata.

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0-4	5-10	11-15	16-17
£282	£312	£370.80	£420.24

5. Exceptional allowances

We can provide additional financial support in exceptional circumstances.

Instances could include but are not limited to; residential/non-residential school trips, school bursaries and educational/training equipment.

We may cover or reimburse payments for statutory documents and life story work record keeping (i.e. identity work), for example, birth certificates, passports, school photos, driving licences. (NB. The cost of driving lessons is covered by the basic fostering allowance).

Carers should discuss any queries with their supervising social worker if they believe they require exceptional financial support.



6. Purchase of equipment

A one-off, maximum amount of £500 is payable to ensure newly approved foster carers have the necessary equipment needed to care for the children and young people they are approved to care for.

Thereafter, foster carers are expected to make their own arrangements to replace equipment; except for replacement cot mattresses and car seats which will be paid for by Nottinghamshire County Council.

Whilst the basic fostering allowance is intended to cover normal replacement of household equipment, it is not expected to cover the additional replacement costs caused by a child who has damaged household equipment.

Where the fostering service manager accepts that there are extra costs, the options are:

- reimbursement through the foster carer's own insurance or the authority's insurance scheme
- an exceptional compensatory payment.

7. Education

The government provides Pupil Premium to improve educational outcomes for looked after children. For the financial year 2023/2024, £2,530 is available for each looked after child which goes directly to Virtual Schools. For Nottinghamshire children, schools can claim Pupil Premium every term through our child's personal education plan.

All looked after children should have a personal education plan (PEP), which the child or young person's social worker is responsible for together with the designated teacher. This will identify the child's educational and developmental needs and contain personalised targets which inform the spending of the eligible child's pupil premium. Foster carers should be included in the meetings about a child's personal education plan. These meetings are an opportunity for foster carers, and the child's social worker, to understand how the school is using this additional funding for the benefit of a foster child's learning.

A 16 to 19 bursary is available to young people continuing in education after their academic year 11.





8. Transport costs

Travel expenses at the rate of 45 pence per mile are agreed for journeys that are specific to the child in placement, such as visits to hospital, special clinics, physiotherapist, attending case conferences and reviews of foster carers/child, visits to school, visits to relatives, social work meetings in respect of the child, expenses incurred when a child runs away, maintaining family time with the child and travel to maintain a particular religion. The cost of public transport for agreed travel will be reimbursed.

Foster carers should submit mileage claims monthly via their supervising social worker. Claims submitted more than six months after they were incurred will not be reimbursed.

9. Large families transport allowance

Foster families where the total number of carers (2 if a couple, 1 if a single carer), PLUS the number of the carer(s) own children (under 18 years), PLUS the number of foster children (under 18 years) is six or more, can apply for this allowance.

All foster carers can be paid this allowance if the eligibility criteria is met and whether or not a foster carer has their own transport. The allowance is designed to assist foster families with large numbers of children by providing an additional £43.50 per week. Foster carers who are eligible for this allowance can use it to best meet their own circumstances.

If foster carers are, or become, eligible for this allowance, their supervising social worker will make the application for them. Large vehicle allowance may also be payable pro-rotta to eligible foster carers.

10. Safety

It is important that foster carers talk to their supervising social worker about all aspects of caring safely for the child(ren) living with them, as financial assistance may be available to support them to do so.





11. Keeping contact with the child

Where the child is absent from the foster home and regular allowances have stopped, there may still be costs to the foster carers to keep contact with the child.

These will have been agreed with the children's service manager as part of the council's plan for the child.

12. Babysitting/childcare expenses

The council provides babysitting/childcare expenses at £7.50 per hour per child. Babysitting should generally not exceed five hours.

Foster carers must have prior agreement from their supervising social worker, before babysitting/childcare arrangements can take place.



Support care

Foster carers who provide support care will still receive the basic fostering allowances plus their levels payment where applicable and the new fostering supplement at a pro-rata rate depending on how many days of support care they are providing. This is the equivalent of 1/7th of basic fostering allowance and level fee for each day of support care provided.

If a child goes to support care on a Friday and they return to their mainstream carers on a Sunday, this will count as two days of care for the mainstream carer, but three days for the support carer. The support carer will get paid for three days of care, but the mainstream carer will have used only two days out of 28 days as the child has been away for two nights.

Example for a newly approved support foster carer on level 1


Looked after child aged 9, staying from Friday 4pm until Sunday 4pm (counted as three days for payment purposes)

Basic fostering allowance per day - £25

Level 1 payment per day £11.43

Fostering supplement per day - £1.43

Total payment for 3 days - £113.58



The following payment structures are for previous schemes that are no longer recruited to so do not apply to newly approved foster carers.

Foster carers for disabled children

Foster carers for disabled children provide day-to-day physical, emotional, and social care on a permanent, bridging, or long-term basis for children whose needs are complex and challenging. The individual needs of a child may mean that there are additional costs in caring for them. Consideration should be given to a child's eligibility for Disability Living Allowance or, where aged over 16, Personal Independence Payments (PIP). If DLA is not awarded, a request for an exceptional payment could be considered by the child's service manager.

Contract care

Contract carers offer regular 'short breaks' for disabled children/young people whose needs are complex and challenging. Contract carers receive basic fostering allowances, paid pro-rata, plus an annual allowance.

Fostering futures

Fostering futures foster carers receive fixed allowances for care of individual children.

11plus

Foster carers who look after a child who is aged 11 years or over at the start of their placement may receive this allowance.



Other allowances

Retainer allowances

If a foster carer is suspended from active fostering because of a complaint or allegation made against them, in some circumstances the council may pay a retainer allowance, such as if there is a decision to retain a placement with the foster carer.

Sessional allowances

Where foster carers undertake fostering champion work such as champion calls/ visits, supporting training or recruitment events, they are entitled to a sessional payment of £22.31. A 'session' is two hours.

Payments

Payments to all new foster carers will be made directly by bank transfer.

Foster carers can choose whether they would like their allowances payments to be made weekly or four-weekly. Payments are made directly to foster carer bank accounts and are usually made on the Friday of each week. The weekly payment period is from a Monday to a Sunday.

Bank remittance slips

The remittance slip will show a detailed breakdown of allowances paid for the child placed with you and to you as a foster carer. Remittance slips will be issued on a weekly basis.



Payment during child's absence

Allowances are not normally paid when the child is away from the foster home.

There will be exceptions such as:

Holiday absence

Where a child is absent from the foster home for more than one night (school outing, camp, etc.) and the foster carer has to meet all or some of the expenses incurred, although the basic fostering allowance may cease, these expenses can be reimbursed.

Missing from care

Where a child is absent from the foster home without authorisation for more than one night, the basic fostering allowance may cease. However, the foster carer may still be incurring expenditure, and reasonable expenses will be recognised and reimbursed.

Hospitalisation of a child

The basic fostering allowances automatically continue for two weeks but the children's service manager can extend these when the foster carers are still having to meet some or all of the costs.

Approved support care for the child

The assessment of a child's needs can lead to a programme of support care being agreed. This type of foster care helps to support and maintain a child's main foster placement. Fostering allowances and levels payments are unaffected for the first 28 full days, in each financial year, when a child is away from their main foster placement for a period of support care.

Most support care arrangements take place at a weekend.

Foster carers who are unclear about any aspect of entitlement to payment when a child is absent from their care, should speak to their supervising social worker.

Overpayment

Overpayment can occur for a variety of reasons including when circumstances change quickly or because the payments team has not been told to stop the payments.

It is the carer's responsibility to check allowances they receive and to notify the payments team immediately if allowances have continued in error after a child has left. Any overpayment will need to be repaid.

Foster carers can help prevent overpayment issues by calling the payments team directly on **0115 804 3840** to tell them about any changes or by emailing the payments team on **CYPPayments@nottscg.gov.uk**





Tax relief scheme

The income tax scheme foster carers use is called 'qualifying tax relief'.

Please see the leaflet Qualifying Care Relief (Simplified Method) Tax Scheme for Foster Carers factsheet or refer to **www.hmrc.gov.uk** or contact The Fostering Network's advice line tel: **020 7401 9582** available between 10am-3pm, Monday to Friday.

State pensions for carers

The department for works and pensions **www.dwp.gov.uk**

The pension service for a pension forecast **www.direct.gov.uk**

All foster carers need to register as self-employed with HM Revenue and Customs. For further advice and assistance, please contact the following:

New registrations: **0300 200 3504**
Registered foster carers: **0300 200 3310**
Web: **www.hmrc.gov.uk**

For advice on welfare benefits: **www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/benefitsadvice**



Children placed with foster carers under Adoption and Children Act 2002 (after the Adoption Panel)

For foster carers who plan to adopt a child in their care, the foster placement converts to an adoption placement. On the date the agency decision maker confirms a positive adoption panel recommendation on the match with the child, from this date foster allowances will cease, and adoption allowances may begin (subject to eligibility).

Children placed with foster carers under Special Guardianship or other Order

Fostering allowances cease after a Special Guardianship or other Order (which means that the child is no longer fostered) has been made by the courts.

Young people aged 18+

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers 2010 (Regulations and Guidance) requires every local authority to have a staying put policy that outlines how the authority will promote the extension of foster care placements beyond a young person's 18th birthday.

For a young person living in foster care, the first looked after child review following their 16th birthday should consider whether a staying put placement is likely to be an option for the young person once they reach 18 years old.

Special education extension funding

Where a young person turns 18 and is in full time education the funding for the placement will remain the same until the end of the academic year (last Friday in July) in which they turn 18. There is no expectation for the young person to claim income support – all payments will remain the same to ensure there is as little disruption to the young person as possible.

Staying put

A staying put arrangement is where a young person who has been living in foster care remains in the former foster home after the age of 18.

This aims to ensure that young people can remain with their former foster carers until they are prepared for adulthood, can experience a transition like their peers, avoid social exclusion and be more likely to avoid a subsequent housing and tenancy breakdown.

Planning for a staying put arrangement should be considered and incorporated into the looked after review/pathway plan from the age of 16 years.

If you are currently caring for a young person aged 16 years of age or over and feel you require further advice, please ask your supervising social worker or your child's social worker.

Where the special education extension funding does not apply, the total amount paid to the staying put carer is made up of three amounts:

- **Staying put allowance:**

The local authority pays the allowance directly to the provider. From April 2023 for new staying put arrangements i.e. for those turning 18 it is £164.94 per week.

- **Food and utilities:**

Each young person is expected to pay a contribution of £30 a week from their own income (either from work or from benefits) to cover the cost of food and utilities.

- **Rent:**

The young person will pay from their own income (either through benefits or wages) rent for the room directly to the carer who is providing the staying put arrangement. It is usually based on local housing allowance – this amount varies across Nottinghamshire's districts (approximately £70).

These amounts are calculated to ensure that the total income received by the staying put carer equates to the fostering rate for 16-17-year-olds.

If a young person is working or undertaking an apprenticeship (therefore not receiving universal credit or the housing benefit element) the amounts of who pays what amount will change. The foster carer will still receive £264.94 but it might be the young person pays £100. Please liaise with the social worker or personal advisor to confirm how this will be paid.



Refer a friend scheme

Our fostering service runs an incentive scheme for approved foster carers. If you know someone who is interested in becoming a foster carer, you can 'refer a friend'. If that person then goes on to become an approved foster carer with the council, you will receive £1,000 as a one-off allowance.

Please let your supervising social worker know that you have recommended them under the refer a friend scheme.

Payment/financial enquiries

Foster carers are paid on a Monday – Sunday basis, with payments going into the bank account on Friday. So, we pay 5 days in arrears and 2 days in advance.

Foster carers can contact the payments team for clarification about fostering payments or their supervising social worker for queries including responsibilities/future entitlements as a foster carer.

The payments team can be reached on **0115 804 3840**

Email: **CYPPayments@nottscg.gov.uk**



Discounts and deals

All our foster carers are entitled to a MAX card which gives discounts locally and nationally.

There are also some local businesses that offer a discount to foster carers. Please visit the support and benefits page for details:

<https://fostering.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/support-and-benefits/>

Please contact the provider in advance to ensure that the discount is still in place and have your ID badge with you.

Fostering Network membership

All Nottinghamshire County Council foster carers are automatically made members of the Fostering Network when they are approved. As a member, foster carers have access to a variety of benefits. For further details visit:

www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/membership/foster-carer-membership

Foster carer handbook

The handbook reflects policies, procedure and guidance for the fostering service which cover many common situations faced by foster carers on a day to day basis. It is provided to help you understand the sort of things that your fostering service requires of you. It has been designed for new and existing foster carers.

www.fosteringhandbook.com/nottinghamshire

Information is correct as at March 2023. This document is reviewed annually, normally for 1 April. Specific sections may be reviewed and updated at different intervals and we recommend that you visit the Nottinghamshire fostering website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/fostering/support-training-and-payments for the most up-to-date information.



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**



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