

## **Placement Review: Fees and Allowances 2026/27**



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**National weekly allowances are set by government and are updated every year (Usually around February to April), CYC always uses these rates. These rates are applied from the 1<sup>st</sup> April.**

## **1: Child Allowance**

This allowance will be reviewed annually and updated based on Government guidance.

The Foster Carer weekly child allowance is allocated to cover the average costs of looking after a child as part of the Foster Carer's family. The amounts are below.

Age	Current Weekly Allowance 2025/26
0-4	£176.05
5-10	£194.04
11-15	£220.01
16-17	£258.02

It is recommended that the child's weekly allowance covers the following costs:

- General care costs including food, accommodation and contribution towards utility related household costs
- Normal replacement of clothing
- Pocket Money and child savings
- Normal transport associated with any child living within a family including to and from local school and out of school activities
- The basic costs associated with contact e.g. telephone costs and the child's drinks and food
- Attendance at child care review meetings
- Participation in clubs and activities
- Keeping record of events and memories about the child for the child
- Repayment scheme for a computer / I pad required for school

The Fostering Network recommended breakdown of the child allowance is below.

Age	Food	Clothing	Transport	Personal	Household	Total
0-4	34%	22%	8%	6%	30%	100%

5-10	32%	26%	7%	8%	27%	100%
11-15	32%	26%	11%	10%	21%	100%
16+	30%	26%	9%	17%	18%	100%

## **2: Birthday and Christmas / Festival allowances**

It is accepted that there are important events which incur additional costs for Foster Carers. Accordingly, a payment equivalent to one week's fostering allowance is automatically paid prior to the child's birthday and Christmas period.

A Foster Carer can request that the allowance is paid to cover another major religious festival instead of Christmas. Any new placement will receive these allowances if children are placed shortly before these occasions.

For any placement ending before the child/young person's birthday, this money will normally be recovered from the carers unless the carers provide the gifts they have purchased to the child.

Christmas payments are made approximately four weeks before Christmas falls. For any placement ending three weeks before Christmas Day, the allowance will normally be recovered.

Age	Current Birthday Allowance 2025/26	Current Christmas/ Festival Allowance 2025/26
0-4	£176.05	£176.05
5-10	£194.04	£194.04
11-15	£220.01	£220.01
16-17	£258.02	£258.02

## **3: Holiday allowances**

Each Foster Carer household is entitled to 2 weeks holiday allowance; this is equivalent to 2 week's child allowance per year for each child living with them. The payment relates to each financial year (1st April to 31st March) and the amount to be paid is in accordance with the age of the child.

The holiday allowance is paid to support a carer to take a child on holiday or to be used for holiday activities such as day trips or outings. Foster Carers are advised to retain receipts for this expenditure. The holiday allowance is to be paid proportionately to the length of time the child is in placement subject to the discretion of the Fostering Service Manager.

Foster Carers should claim the holiday allowance at the time it is needed. It can be claimed in units of one weeks allowance up to the maximum of three weeks. The payment is not generated automatically. Foster Carers need to ensure that holiday allowances are spent on holidays or appropriate activities as agreed with their Fostering Social Worker.

Where a child changes placement during the financial year and the holiday allowance has already been claimed, the payment of additional holiday allowance to the new carers is at the discretion of the Fostering Service Manager and will only be paid in exceptional circumstances.

A 'Stay Over Foster Carer may request holiday allowance for a specific child over and above the three weeks allowance If the 'Stay Over' Foster Carer is taking the child away on holiday. This is at the discretion of the Fostering Service manager.

Age	Holiday allowance week 1 2025/26	Holiday allowance week 2 2025/26
0-4	£176.05	£176.05
5-10	£194.04	£194.04
11-15	£220.01	£220.01
16-17	£258.02	£258.02

#### **4: Holiday supplement allowance**

A Foster Carer, in common with other parents and carers, must ensure that all children in care attend school during the school term. In recognition of the increased cost of holidays in the school holidays a supplement is available for each child up to a maximum of £300 per year.

The holiday supplement allowance is only payable if agreed in advance with the Fostering Service Manager prior to booking the holiday.

A request for payment of the holiday supplement will need to include evidence that the cost of the holiday for each child is greater than the 3 weeks holiday allowance.

The Local Authority will pay for any costs incurred in purchasing a passport for a child and any Visa which may be required for holiday travel.

#### **5: Clothing Allowance**

- Start up

Children and young people may come into care needing additional clothing. A Foster Carer can claim a clothing allowance at the beginning of a placement up to a maximum of 3x the child's weekly allowance.

- School uniform

Foster Carers may request a school uniform grant for a child or young person who needs to change school. For planned changes in school uniform, for example in moving from lower to upper school, it is expected that Foster Carers will budget accordingly.

- Work clothing and equipment

On an ongoing basis the weekly allowance should enable Foster Carers to maintain and increase the level of clothing over time.

A Foster Carer may request a one off grant towards the cost of work clothing that a young person requires at the beginning of training or employment

Where a child is changing placement, it is expected that they will move with a reasonable amount of clothing that fits and is in good condition and appropriate for seasonal conditions.

Children should also be provided with a suitcase or bag for transporting clothes. Children may want to keep clothes they have grown out of as they have come from their family. Foster carers need to ensure they check with the child and social worker before disposing of clothing.

## **6: Tuition**

Private tuition will not be funded and should be discussed in the child/ young persons Personal Education Plan.

## **7: School trips**

Requests for exceptional residential school trips e.g. skiing need to be made in advance to the Service Manager of the child and will be considered on a case by case basis.

## **8: Nursery fees**

Foster carers can apply for age related free nursery hours.

Requests for a financial contribution towards additional hours can be made via the Service Manager of the child to the Fostering Service Manager. This will be considered on a case by case basis, if the nursery provision is felt to be in the best interest of the child.

## **9: Pocket Money**

There are two basic principles, which apply to pocket money:

- There needs to be some measure of equality between children within the foster household. Therefore, carers need to take into account the pocket money paid to other children in the household.
- The pocket money should be realistic depending on the age of the child. Children can be encouraged to 'save' their pocket money to buy special items as well as for treats such as sweets, CD's, or games.

Pocket money should be given to children and young people for their own use and not to pay for regular entertainment, clothes or personal toiletries as this should come out of the fostering allowance. Any deviations from this need to be discussed with the child's social worker.

The amount of pocket money must be clarified at the start of a placement and discussed and recorded at the placement agreement meeting. The amount arrived at must be compatible with the foster carers' birth children still living in the home and other foster children.

Where there are concerns that it may be risky for a child or young person to have their pocket money directly, this should be agreed with the supervising social worker and the child's social worker and clearly recorded.

If a child or young person has to spend time in a respite care there is an expectation that the respite carer will pay the child or young person's pocket money.

It is not expected that pocket money is paid to children under the age of five. They can have occasional treats instead of pocket money.

It is recommended that an increase in pocket money is linked to the child or young person's birthday to mark their increasing age and maturity

## **10: Health care expenses**

Health care expenses for children are generally exempt from charges under the NHS. Children / young people with diagnosed conditions may be eligible to claim Disability Living Allowance. In exceptional circumstances, Foster Carers may request the reimbursement of unavoidable costs for items which may not have been exempt from NHS charges or payable through DLA payment. E.g.: glasses, immunisations for holidays.

## **11: Household related costs**

- Furniture and equipment

At the point of Foster Carers initial assessment, the basic equipment needed will be discussed, at this point certain items may be provided at the discretion of the Fostering Service Manager. From that point it is the expectation that Foster Carers are responsible for the overall condition and furnishing of the foster home to an acceptable

standard, including the security and maintenance of any garden or outside area. It is an expectation that carers take out household insurance.

It is expected that the need for additional furniture, equipment and the replacement of any equipment, furniture or furnishings, will be assessed during supervision visits and if any replacement is required ,agreement will need to be sought from the Fostering Service Manager prior to any purchase. Receipts must be retained and passed to the Supervising Social Worker for payment.

Replacements items must be purchased by CYC from agreed suppliers, i.e. Beds, mattresses

Any specialist equipment or adaptations needed will be subject to a needs assessment based on the young person's requirement.

On commencement of a placement basic equipment should include a bed, storage space for children's clothing and personal items, 2 sets of bedding, pillows, mattress protector or cover as required . For babies and younger children basic equipment will include a cot, buggy, car seat, high chair, changing equipment, sterilising/bottle equipment, 3 sets of cot bedding. It is expected that replacement bedding for longer term placements will be funded out of the child's weekly allowance.

In addition, specific items might be identified i.e.: stair gates, cooker guards, smoke alarms, pond covers, gate and window locks etc, for which loan of equipment or assistance with purchase may be negotiated with the Fostering Service Manager on a case by case basis.

In some circumstances, in order for a placement to proceed, more specific equipment may need to be provided i.e. bunk beds, a double buggy or car seat. These items would be classed as equipment provided for a carer and would not belong to specific children. However, any specifically modified equipment for the child/young person could move with them.

Equipment purchased by the fostering service remains the property of City of York Council. As a result should equipment be in a good condition but not required by the original Foster Carer, then it may be provided to others who need that equipment. Foster carers should not sell unwanted equipment purchased by CYC unless this is agreed and they are using the proceeds towards other equipment.

## **12: Transport**

There is an expectation that children and young people will undertake most journeys in their day-to-day lives, by walking, cycling, and using public transport or in the foster family's car.

The child weekly allowance includes an element / percentage to cover the travelling expenses for a child. For example;

- Local trips for medical / health appointments

- Transport to and from local school
- Taking and collecting from local leisure and social activities
- Transport to contact, where contact is local to the foster home
- Attendance at reviews, case conferences, and child protection meetings

Local travel costs are covered within the child's weekly allowance, therefore it is expected that the first 200 miles driven by carers each month will not be claimed for.

Any mileage over 200 miles per month can be claimed. Mileage claims should be submitted to the Supervising Social Worker, when they are processed the first 200 miles will be discounted. Claims must be submitted within 3 months of the journey.

### **13: Public transport and bus passes**

Young people over the aged 12 will be encouraged to make use of public transport where necessary for school and leisure activities. All young people are now eligible for an all-day bus pass for First York within the City of York area.

For young people placed outside the York area, corresponding arrangements will be made to cover bus pass provision/reimbursement.

- Bicycles

Young people are eligible to reclaim the purchase of a bicycle with safety equipment, if this will enable them to cycle safely to school and for they request it for their leisure time. Any proposed bicycle purchase should be fully considered and costs agreed by the Fostering Service Manager prior to any Foster Carer committing to a purchase. Provision of a bicycle should be considered in the context of the child's travel/transport plan.

A bicycle and safety equipment can be purchased up to the £350 .Additional amounts can be contributed from the Delegated Authority payment.

- Driving and moped lessons

The purchase of provisional car / moped licence and starter pack of up to 10 driving lessons may be considered on an individual basis by both the Fostering and Child's Service Manager as part of a wider plan of supporting a young person's independence.

### **14: Foster Carer Fees**

Foster carer fees will be paid in line with agreed skill levels

- Accredited
- Advanced
- Advanced +
- Specialist

Grade	Weekly Skill Fee	Capacity fee Second placement	Capacity fee Third placement
Accredited	£125	£62.50	£125
Advanced	£250	£100	£200
Advanced +	£375	£112.50	£225
Specialist	£500	£125	£250

Each Foster Carer will be assessed and reviewed to determine their level within the fee structure.

All Foster Carers on Level one to three will be paid a skill fee when they have a child or young person in placement.

Payments of the fee may continue if a Foster Carer is without children in the following circumstances

- i) When a Foster Carer does not have a child in placement -up to 14 days in total
- ii) A foster carer who has a named placement may request to take a holiday break without the foster children - up to 14 days in total. Foster carers are expected to give a minimum of 1 months notice to allow an alternative placement to be arranged.
- iii) When a Foster Carer is sick, up to 14 days in total iv) A maximum of 28 days in total in any year will be covered by these payments.

The Fostering Service Manager's may use discretion to continue to pay a fee to Foster Carers who are undergoing an investigation or who are being re assessed. This will be time limited and subject to review.

## **15: Long Service Awards**

In acknowledgement of long service of Foster Carers. The following will be paid

- 5 years' service £250
- 10 years' service £500
- 15 years' service £750
- 20 years' service £1000

A Foster Carer's length of service will be identified by the Supervising Social Worker and noted in the foster carer annual review. Appropriate payment will be authorised by the Fostering Service Manager.

## **16: Emergency payment**

Foster Carers may be asked to take a placement in an emergency situation, they will be offered an additional payment, and this is in recognition of the disruption caused to the household. The usual fees and allowance for the child will also be paid.

Emergency placements are defined as a same day placement that needs to take place without any pre planning. The additional payment will be £50 a day for up to 6 days to allow the Local Authority to plan for the child.

### **Exceptions**

All exceptions to the Fees and Allowances Policy will need to be agreed in writing by the Fostering Service Manager.