



**BARNSELEY METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Children, Young People and
Families
Fostering Service**

**Information about Payments to Foster Carers
June 2017**

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This document is to give you an overview of payments that are made to you as a foster carer. This document and the actual payments will be reviewed annually by Barnsley MBC Fostering Service.

Weekly Fostering Allowance

The weekly Fostering Allowance from April 2015 is based on the National Minimum Fostering Rates:

The weekly allowance is based on what is recommended by Central Government. Any increase will be based on the rate of inflation that Central Government recommend.

Payments are made every fortnight in arrears. This is directly into the foster carer's bank account unless an alternative method of payment is requested.

The weekly allowance is paid in respect of the child in placement. The allowance covers the following:

- **Food – including school meals**
- **Health and hygiene**
- **Toys and play equipment**
- **Activities including school trips and some residential trips**
- **Clothing**
- **Pocket money**
- **Mobile phone top ups**
- **travel to school**
- **Contribution to household costs, for example, heating, lighting**
- **Bedding and replacement items**
- **Day to day transport, either by car or public transport**
- **Family day trips**
- **Personal allowance e.g. cinema, bowling, swimming**

Section A – Additional Payments to Foster Carers

Holiday, Birthday and Festivals Allowances

These payments are in relation to the individual child and will be paid annually.

Holiday payments will automatically be made in May. The holiday payment is used to fund a holiday for the child or pay for alternative extra curriculum activities e.g. over the summer holidays.

For those foster children who were not in placement in May there will be some discretion to pay the annual holiday allowance at a later date. The Fostering Support Worker should submit a specific request detailing the specific reasons for making the payment to the Head of Service Children in Care

Birthday payments will be paid within 1 month prior to the child's birthday. This payment covers additional expenditure at birthdays.

Christmas and other Festival payments will be paid for any child in placement on the date of the festival which is significant to them

Clothing Allowances

An initial clothing allowance is not paid automatically. Fostering Support Workers should always discuss the child's clothing and other belongings with the Foster Carer at the point of placement. If there is an identified need for an initial clothing allowance the FSW should make a specific request on behalf of the Foster Carer to the Fostering Team Manager.

Clothing	
Age	Max
0 to 4	£75
5 to 10	£100
11 to 15	£120
16+	£120

This payment is only paid when the child is first admitted to Care. The purchasing of additional clothes is then to be budgeted from the weekly allowance in accordance with the calculation of 15% of the maintenance allowance per week.

Maximum payment of £200 if child needs additional equipment such as a holdall or other storage equipment.

School Uniform

When a child changes school or arrives in Care without the appropriate school uniform an additional uniform allowance can be paid. If there is an identified

need for a school uniform allowance the FSW should make a specific request on behalf of the Foster Carer to the Fostering Team Manager.

Uniform	
Age	Max
5 - 11	£40
11 - 16	£80

If a school has additional specialist uniform requirements these should be discussed with the FSW and if supported this should be included in the request to the Team Manager and an additional discretionary amount can be agreed up to £75 for 5.11 and £150 for 11-16.

The further replacement and purchasing of school uniform is the responsibility of the foster carer and should be budgeted from the weekly allowance.

Extra Curricular Activities

Barnsley MBC is keen to encourage all children in care to experience a wide range of extra curriculum activities such as participation in sport, music and other hobbies. Foster carers will generally be expected to fund such activities from the weekly allowance.

In general extracurricular activities should equate to 20% of the weekly maintenance allowance.

If a child has additional educational needs or needs to take part in residential visits or other developmental activities through school which are over and above the usual day trips or purchase of additional materials expected of every parent the first approach should be in conjunction with the Child's Social Worker to the school to use the Pupil Premium which is paid for every individual looked after child in each school.

If the Pupil Premium is not available and yet the need for the additional activity remains the Fostering Support Worker should submit a request to the Team Manager on behalf of the Foster Carer and an exceptional payment could be considered.

The Pupil Premium should also be considered to fund any low level therapeutic support needs a child might have which could be reasonably provided by schools.

Transport Costs

The weekly fostering allowance contains 5 % of a transport element for day to day journeys including school runs and normal medical visits. This equates to 25 miles per week per child.

Any claims for additional mileage should be completed and processed by the Fostering Support Supervising Social Worker on a monthly basis. The first 25 miles per child should be recorded for illustration purposes but the cost of this is included in the weekly allowance for the child. Any additional mileage will be paid at the following rates. Any regular exceptional mileage for contact or to attend a particular school for example must be agreed with the child's social worker and recorded in the child's placement plan and subsequently at the child's review. The FSW should also make a note on the Foster Carers file.

The current mileage rate is 45p per mile and this will be paid if a child requires transport in excess of 25 miles per week.

On any single journey of over 50 miles the additional miles will be paid at 20p per mile

Car parking costs associated with contact or other agreed specific journeys required by the Care Plan will be met. Car parking costs shouldn't be incurred taking a child to school. Any exceptional circumstances should be discussed with the Support Worker.

Mileage and parking for Foster Carer training is included in the foster carer's fee. As far as possible the Service will endeavour to provide training in venues which do not incur a parking cost.

Where training would involve travel outside of the Borough mileage can be paid but should be agreed with the Fostering Support Worker in advance. Carers attending training together would be encouraged to travel together to reduce the cost.

Mileage can be paid for attendance at Fostering Support Groups but carers are encouraged to attend the group closest to their home although it is recognised that there may be good reasons for attending one at another time. These alternative arrangements should be confirmed with the Fostering Support Worker

If a foster carer is receiving Disability Living Allowance for a child there will be no additional mileage or car parking paid for any medical visits in respect of that child. (See separate policy and guidance on Foster Carers and Disability Living Allowance)

Initial Setting up payments

An initial set-up grant of up to £500 can be agreed as part of the initial assessment and referenced in the Form F. Requirements should be itemised and agreed as essential. Foster Carers must produce receipts for items purchased

Any exceptional additional payments must be recommended by the Fostering Assessor and agreed by the Head of Service.

The replacement of equipment is to be budgeted for in the weekly allowance.

Any exceptional equipment replacement costs must be recommended by the Fostering Support Worker and agreed by the Head of Service. Foster carers must produce receipts for the items purchased.

Section B - Guidance to Foster Carers

Weekly Pocket Money Rates

All school age children (5 years plus) should receive a minimum weekly pocket money payment. This should be given in cash to the child weekly or a proportion of it, with the rest saved. Pocket money is not to be confused with other expenditure given to the child for activities. For any child in a long term placement, the foster carer is expected to open a bank account for savings. For any children in a short term placement, any money not given in hand should be saved and recorded. The child will then take this money with them when they move on from the placement.

Pocket Money	
Age	
5	£2.50
6	£3.00
7	£3.50
8	£4.00
9	£4.50
10	£5.00
11	£6.00
12	£7.00
13	£8.00
14	£9.00
15	£10.00
16	£15.00

The amounts above are only given as guidance and actual payments should be agreed with Supervising Social Workers on their visits and recorded on foster carers' files.

Insurance Claims

Foster carers will be expected to have the relevant insurance cover for any damage (see advice and guidance about what is required on the Fostering Network site)

In any cases where a claim is declined by the foster carer's own insurers the issue should be raised with the Fostering Support Worker.

Car use

All foster carers, where applicable, are expected to have fully comprehensive car insurance. The insurance certificate needs to state the car is used for business use or as a foster carer. It is the foster carer's responsibility to ensure all documentation is kept up to date in relation to cars, e.g. MOT certificate and renewal of insurance. These documents must be available for the Supervising Social Worker to check as part of the Annual Health & Safety Check which is required for the foster carers review panel. All foster carers who drive must have a valid driving licence which will be checked annually by the Supervising Social worker.

Child Care

Foster carers should look to other foster carers to provide child care on a reciprocal basis under the delegated authority arrangements.

Overnight stays

Any arrangement under delegated authority involving overnight stays must be notified in advance with the Child's Social Worker and the Fostering Support Worker. This does not go against the carer's delegated authority to agree the placement but is included in this section as there may be issues around payment should the arrangements continue for more than one night. It is acknowledged it may not always be possible to notify anyone of an overnight stays of a single night but certainly both the Child's Social Worker and the Support Worker should always be aware of stays of more than one night.

Retainer Payments

Any situation where a retainer payment might be appropriate must be recommended by the Child's Social worker and the Fostering Support Worker and agreed by the Head of Service.

Refer a Friend

Any foster carer who refers a friend to the Fostering Service and they are subsequently approved as a BMBC foster carer will receive a payment of £300. The payment will be made to the referring foster carer once a child is placed. This must be a full-time placement and only one payment is made per recommendation.

Overpayments

Occasionally mistakes are made and foster carers are overpaid. It is the foster carer's responsibility to notify their Support Worker and most importantly

Finance Section as soon as possible. Finance will then make an arrangement with the foster carer to repay the overpayment.

Review

This document and the payment scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis

Appendices

Appendix 1

Foster Carers and Disability Living Allowance – Procedure and Guidance

Appendix 2

Financial Form

Appendix 1

Office use only Version No: Date Issued: Previously Issued Main Section Category Authorized: Designation:

Procedure / Guidance

Title: Disability Living Allowance – Foster Children and Foster Carers

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This procedure details Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's position in respect of applications for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children in the care of the Local Authority and how DLA should be managed by the Foster Carer in conjunction with the Child's Social Worker and Fostering Support Worker.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This procedure relates to all those involved in the application and management of the DLA in respect of a children in Care.
- 2.2 It outlines eligibility, when to claim DLA and how any monies received should be utilized.
- 2.3 From January 2016 children under 16 will continue to be covered by DLA but those over 16 will need to make a claim for the new Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

3 References and Relevant Legislation

- 3.1 Disabled Persons Act 1996
- 3.2 The Children Act 1989
- 3.3 Carers and Disabled Children's Act 2000
- 3.4 The Disability Discrimination Act 2005

4 Introduction

- 4.1 Disability Living Allowance is a benefit for adults and children with disabilities. It is for people who need help looking after themselves and those who find it difficult to walk or get around.

This Policy Procedure and Practice Guidance confirms BMBC's position in respect of applications for DLA and how successful claims should be managed by the Foster Carer supported by the Fostering Support Worker and the Child's Social Worker.

- 4.2 DLA is to be used to enhance the life opportunities for the child for whom the claim has been made. DLA can be an important resource in supporting a child to improve and maximize their life chances

5 Actions

	DLA Application	
5.1	At the point of admission to the care of the local authority the child's social worker should inform the DWP of the child's change in circumstances. Any DLA they were previously receiving will stop at this point and a re-application will need to be made. Unless: - The child is section 20 accommodated and in this case the child's parents may retain the DLA for a period and they will need to be involved in all subsequent discussions about how the DLA is spent.	CSW
5.2	If the child was not previously in receipt of DLA a claim for DLA should always be considered at the first review	CSW and IRO
5.3	If a decision is made to claim DLA the foster carer should obtain a DLAICH form. This should be completed and its completion recorded on both the child's and the foster carer's file. A copy of the form should be retained on the child's file	FC/CSW/FSW
5.4	If the decision of the review is not to apply for DLA this should be recorded on the child's file together with a review date if it is expected that circumstances may change	CSW
5.5	The Fostering Support Worker should assist the foster carer in completing the application and ensure that advice	FC and FSW and Welfare

	and support is provided by the welfare rights service.	Rights
5.6	If the application for DLA is successful the child should have their own bank account into which the DLA should be paid. The Foster Carers should be named as Benefits Appointee for the allowance and the child's bank account. DLA is paid to the child and not to the carer.	FC and FSW
5.7	There should be a note on both the child's and the foster carer's file as to whether or not the application was successful	FSW and CSW
5.8	If the application was not successful the Welfare Rights service should be involved immediately to consider and appeal	FC and FSW
5.9	Any queries regarding a claim and the progress of a claim can be made through the Department of Work and Pensions Benefits enquiry line. Any enquiries must be made by the foster carer as the applicant but support should be provided by the FSW. DLA Helpline - 03457123456	FC and FSW
	DLA Expenditure	
5.10	DLA should be spent by the foster carer only to secure services and other support to assist with the additional needs of the child for whom the application was made	FC
5.11	DLA is intended to be used to support everyday living and can be used to support a range of activities and services including support – therapeutic, medical or practical, equipment, activities to enhance the quality of the child's life and additional household expenses such as extra heating or extra laundry to meet the needs of the child. The DLA can not be spent on activities or equipment for other children in the household or for adults in the household.	FC
5.12	Any specific medical equipment purchased for the benefit of the child should be purchased with the approval of the paediatric support team and confirmed at a LAC review	FC and CSW
5.13	The FSW should regularly monitor the use of the DLA at each supervisory visit	FSW and FC
5.14	The CSW should regularly review the use of the DLA at each LAC visit	CSW and FC
5.15	The use of the DLA should be considered at every LAC review	IRO
5.16	It is essential that the CSW and the FC agree how the DLA will be spent. The broad agreement should be recorded on the child's file	CSW and FC
5.17	DLA is intended to be used on day to day living expenses and should not be saved for the future. This could result in the child being penalized in later years when it could be decided that the money is clearly not required or the child could be refused other benefits on the basis that they have a high level of savings	FC – monitored by FSW and CSW
5.18	The child's bank book/statements should be maintained by the FC along with any records/receipts and invoices for any agreed expenditure. These should be reviewed by the FSW on supervisory visits and details recorded on the	FC and FSW

	carer's file.	
	Carer's Allowance	
5.19	If the child is awarded the higher or rate of DLA care component the carer should be encouraged to make an application for a Carer's Allowance	FC and FSW
5.20	The FSW should support the carer in making the application	FC and FSW
5.21	Any receipt of Carer's Allowance should be recorded on the foster carer's file	FSW
5.22	Any Carer's Allowance received will be deducted from the level six carer's fee that the foster carer will be receiving.	FSW
5.23	An award of DLA mobility component at the highest rate can enable the main car driver to apply for exemption from Road Tax and eligibility for the Blue Badge Scheme	FC and FSW
5.24	Any child over 3 years receiving the mobility element of DLA will not be eligible for any additional mileage payments from the Fostering budget except where these are specifically linked to the placement itself such as contact and have been specifically agreed at the review – medical visits etc are what the mobility element is meant to cover.	FSW to check mileage requests

6 Guidance

Disability Living Allowance

- 6.1 DLA is a tax free benefit payable to children from birth to 16 years who need help and support to look after themselves and / or find it difficult to get around due to an illness or a disability. DLA is divided in to 2 parts a), care component paid at 3 levels low/middle/high and b). mobility component paid at 2 levels – low and high. You can claim both components at the same time if you meet the criteria.
- 6.2 A claim for a child is paid only when a disability means that they have substantial / additional needs above those of the average child.
- 6.3 DLA is not affected by the household income or savings. It does not reduce other benefits. The receipt of DLA may entitle a family to extra support; tax credits; housing benefit and council tax benefit. Foster carers with the support of their Support Workers should check with the Welfare Rights team as to whether they are eligible.
- 6.4 The person making a claim for a child who has additional needs may be able to make a claim for a Carer's Allowance for looking after the child. DLA is paid to the main carer for the child and is to be used to meet the additional costs in respect of the child's disability.

- 6.5 At the age of 16 a new claim must be made for a Personal Independence Payment PIP can be paid directly to the child if they are considered able to manage their own money.
- 6.6 The mobility component can be claimed from the age of 3 years if the child has had a difficulty with walking for at least 3 months. The qualifying period can be the 3 months prior to the child's third birthday. The decision to award DLA at 3 years is dependent on the disability and the impact on the individual child
- 6.7 The mobility component is paid at two rates; higher rate from the age of 3 years, lower rate from the age of 5 years.
- 6.8 The care component is paid at three rates depending on the level and type of additional care needed. It can be claimed from birth but the child must have needed additional help for at least 3 months to qualify and likely to need help for a further 6 months.
- 6.9 If the DLA is to be reviewed carers should always seek advice from the Welfare Rights Service and should be supported to do so by their Fostering Support Worker,

Definition of Additional Needs

- 6.9 To qualify for DLA a child must require additional support which is above that required of the average child of the same age. They must require support during the day and during the night and / or with everyday living tasks such as:- getting out of bed ; going to the toilet ; washing and bathing ; extra help at school ; dressing or undressing; playing and learning ; eating or drinking; taking medicines ; climbing Stairs ; turning over in bed ; communicating with other people ; learning social skills.
- 6.10 The child may need someone with them to prevent them from hurting themselves or others due to behavioral difficulties or protect them from dangers of which they are unaware and prevent accidents. Children who have limited road sense could be at risk out of doors. Children with learning difficulties or on the autistic spectrum could be eligible as could children with a hearing or sight impairment or a mental health problem.

DLA and Additional Fostering Allowances

- 6.11 If a child is awarded DLA this will not affect the Foster Carers Allowance or Skill Based Fee
- 6.12 If a child is awarded the highest level of DLA the child will not be eligible for consideration for additional fostering allowances unless exceptional expenditure is indicated. Additional costs arising from a child's dietary and clothing needs, household expenses and excessive wear and tear

on the home, medical/health needs, play/learning needs, social needs and educational needs should all be met from the DLA.

Foster Carer Signature.....
Date.....

**To be completed by the
supervising social worker**

Mileage/Fares Cost Total

Total Cost Claimed

Signature Supervising Social
Worker

Date

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Foster Carer Expenses Form	Miscellaneous Costs e.g Equipment, clothing, start-up costs, child- care (see Foster carer payments Guidance)	
Name of Foster Carers		
Address		
Post-code		
Names of Children Placed		
Details of items	Cost	Total Cost

Foster Carer Signature.....

Date.....

**To be completed by the
supervising social worker**

Total Cost Claimed

Signature Supervising Social
Worker

Date

Date
