

Solihull Fostering Service – Fee Structure with effect from 10th April 2023

The service has a range of fostering schemes:

- Non-specialist fostering scheme, which includes support for Connected Person (Family and Friends) carers,
- Support breaks/part-time fostering scheme (respite) and Family Links providing short breaks for disabled children.
- ‘Parent and Child’ fostering scheme
- Remand fostering scheme
- PACE fostering scheme
- Dedicated Mental Health placement

CHILD ALLOWANCE

In all of the schemes, carers are paid a weekly child allowance to cover the costs of providing a home to a child. The allowance is intended to cover the costs of looking after any fostered child and it is age-related. This allowance includes provision for savings for children, activities and some foster carer mileage costs. (See dedicated guidance on this for more details.)

FEES

SKILLS FEES

All foster carers are eligible to receive additional skills fees if they meet the requirements in the preceding 12 months. The fees have been set to recognise the additional skills, training and learning of the carer and in addition the role and contribution that the carer makes to the successful development of Solihull fostering service and to improving the ability of the service to meet the needs of children requiring fostering placements.

The skills fee is payable per week per child in placement.

The payment of skills fees is reviewed annually, around the time of the carers’ annual review, on the basis of evidence collected by the foster carer and service records during the preceding year. The fostering social worker will advise foster carers of the level of fee they are due. If a foster carer is awarded a skills fee, payments are received for all placements made with the foster carer in the following year, from the date of the decision of their continued approval as foster carers.

Newly approved carers with no previous related experience will be supported to be able to achieve Skills fee level 1 from initial approval.

There are 2 levels of carer skills fees, which are as follows:

Skills fee 1:

Payable to carer households per week per child in placement from initial after approval as a carer, subject to meeting the following requirements:

Carers (at least one per household) who have met and completed the Training, Support and Development standards (TSDs)

And

Have met the targets agreed in each carer's personal development plan

And

Have undertaken and are able to evidence application of learning from the Solihull Approach training course or agreed equivalent course recognised by Solihull

And

Have undertaken and are able to evidence application of learning from two learning activities as agreed in their Personal Development Plan (PDP) in the last 12 months (3 for a couple of which each carer must have undertaken at least one course).

Skills fee 2:

Carers who have met, and continue to meet, all the skills requirements at Skills 1,

And

Completed a qualification at level 3 or above that is relevant and agreed in the carer's Personal Development Plan (PDP) OR achieved the agreed relevant modules of QCF or agreed equivalent to Level 3 and be able to evidence application of learning

And

Have undertaken mutually agreed tasks (10 hours or more over the year) to support other carers e.g. contribute to learning and training of others *or* 'buddying' etc. and/or support the development of the fostering service e.g. recruitment activity

And

Offer and accept matched EDT placements on a rota basis (only if they have a vacancy and subject to appropriate matching considerations in respect of the children already in placement)

CARER FEE

Foster carers are given terms of approval that reflect the needs of children who the service assesses they are suitable to foster. The Carer Fee is payable to those carers who are approved to care for any matched child, i.e. not only named children. All carers are eligible to apply and be considered for approval to foster any matched children.

It is paid per week per child in placement to each fostering household where carers accept matched children offered unless exceptional circumstances are agreed. A higher rate is payable for a child aged 11 or over at 110% of the basic carer fee.

PARENT AND CHILD FEE

In addition to the normal weekly age-related child fee, the carer will also receive an additional weekly fee in recognition of the cost of providing a placement to the parent of the child. (See dedicated guidance on this for more details.)

REMAND FEE

In addition to the normal weekly age-related child fee, the carer will also receive an additional weekly fee in recognition of the specialist requirements of such placements. (See dedicated guidance on this for more details.)

PACE BED FEE

In addition to the normal weekly age-related child fee, the carer will also receive an additional weekly fee in recognition of the specialist requirements of such placements. (See dedicated guidance on this for more details.)

MENTAL HEALTH BED FEE

In addition to the normal weekly age-related child fee, the carer will also receive an additional weekly fee in recognition of the specialist requirements of such placements. (See dedicated guidance on this for more details.)

PART TIME CARERS

Part-time carers (including respite carers, Family Link carers and carers for children in residential school) will be paid fees and allowances on pro-rata basis. Part-time fees and allowances are paid to cover a 24-hour overnight period. The overall balance of fees and allowances will depend on each individual case, considering the needs of the child during the time they are in placement, and be agreed by a Head of Service.

- a. Respite care provided by SMBC approved foster carer to a looked after child placed with another SMBC foster carer

Part-time fees and allowances are paid for each 24-hour overnight period.

Where the period of care exceeds 24-hour period by more than 2 additional hours, an additional respite session payment will be payable. For any hours beyond 8 hours, but not overnight, the hourly day care rate will be payable.

- b. Part time care provided by SMBC approved foster carer to a child who normally lives with their family (Short Breaks/Family Link and Support Breaks)

Part-time fees and allowances are paid for each 24-hour overnight period.

Where the period of care exceeds 24-hour period by more than 2 additional hours, an additional respite session payment will be payable. For any hours beyond 8 hours, but not overnight, the hourly day care rate will be payable.

In addition, a short break session payment is payable for each arrangement under this category whether the arrangement is for 1, 2, 3 or more days.

ADDITIONAL FACTORS

- The above fostering placements form part of the Foster Care Agreement and Foster Carer Charter, which all foster carers are required to sign annually.
- The rate of fees and allowances are reviewed annually.
- In exceptional cases, for example to offer permanence to a child with significant complex needs (evidenced by history of placement breakdown and / or shortage of matches in family finding) an additional payment maybe considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Head of Service and in line with internal guidance.