

Foster Carers Handbook

Warwickshire Fostering Services

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1. About this document

- 1.1 The purpose of the Foster Care Finance Handbook is to ensure that all foster carers and social care staff are familiar with the fees and allowances to be paid in respect of children placed with Warwickshire County council approved foster carers. This also applies to Connected Persons carers, where fostering allowances are in payment.
- 1.2 The handbook provides information on allowances which are paid to foster carers to provide day to day care for children and young people in care and how these should be administered, including advice on keeping financial records. The various allowances are categorized to assist foster carers and staff in accessing information speedily.
- 1.3 This handbook should be read in conjunction with the [Guidance on Skill Level Scheme](#) which focuses on payments for skills and the professional development of foster carers. The payment for skills scheme is a nationally approved scheme which recognises a professional fostering service. It has been developed to meet the needs of foster carers who are undertaking increasingly complex and demanding tasks in their fostering role. It aims to promote the development of skills by ensuring that training and support underpin its structure and to reward skills by the provision of fee payments for those carers who wish to make use of it and who are able to evidence the delivery of good outcomes for children in care.
- 1.4 The handbook also outlines information with regards to insurance and fostering equipment issues.
- 1.5 Allowances paid to all approved Warwickshire foster carers, are based on Fostering Networks minimum recommended levels to meet the costs of caring for a child. At the beginning of each financial year all foster carers will receive a breakdown of the fostering allowance they will be paid to meet the costs of caring for a child looked after (CLA).
- 1.6 Fostering allowances are paid to carers to cover the following:
 - maintenance;
 - clothing/personal allowances;
 - holidays;
 - birthdays;
 - festivals.

- 1.7 These allowances are paid according to the following age groups.
- 0-4;
 - 5-10;
 - 11-15;
 - 16+
- 1.8 Weekly allowances are paid in arrears on alternative Tuesdays for the fortnight ending the previous Saturday e.g., fortnight ending Saturday 1st February 2020 will be paid on Tuesday 4th February 2020
- 1.9 Social workers and foster carers are jointly responsible for immediately notifying the Placement Hub when a child moves out or moves in. This is to prevent overpayment of allowances. Foster carers should contact the Placement Hub on 02476 754157.
- The email address is placementmoves@warwickshire.gov.uk for issues relating to fostering payments.
- 1.10 Foster carers receive a payslip and remittance advice via their WeLearn email.
- 1.11 Foster carers are responsible for their own tax and National Insurance arrangements and should seek independent advice if needed regarding benefit entitlements.

2. How the weekly allowances should be used

2.1 Maintenance

- 2.1.1 This payment is to contribute to food, light, heating, transport, general living costs (including internet costs) and wear and tear on everyday household items e.g. bedding and decoration for child's bedroom.

2.2 Personal allowance (including clothing)

- 2.2.1 This payment is to meet the costs of:
- the clothing needs of children placed including day/night wear, school items and associated sportswear, and an appropriate bag/case to transport clothing and items where necessary;
 - enhancing children's personal care and development.

- 2.2.2 The allowance is to be used in such a way as to promote self-development, subject to age, ability, and maturity. This would include:
- paying for leisure activities or specific interests;
 - developing skills of saving and budgeting;
 - increasing a child's responsibility and understanding of their choices.
- 2.2.3 Costs resulting from personal care needs associated with a child's difference in culture, religion, disability, gender or sexuality should not be taken from combined personal allowances but should be met from the Maintenance payment. This is to ensure that all children in care after regardless of diversity needs have equal opportunities to pursue leisure interests or to save. For example, feminine hygiene products, specific dietary needs due to allergies etc.
- 2.2.4 In the identification and provision of clothing and associated equipment for children in foster care, the parent(s) and the child wherever possible should be consulted and involved unless otherwise indicated by the child's placement plan.
- 2.2.5 The general principle is that new items (rather than second-hand) are to be purchased. This ensures as far as possible that toys for example meet current safety standards.
- 2.2.6 Unless otherwise indicated by the child's placement plan, children need to understand that the personal allowance is for a foster carer to administer subject to need, and that carers are required to account for the spending of allowances. Only the pocket money element can be used by children as they please.
- 2.2.7 How this money is to be managed should be clearly stipulated and recorded in the child's Individual Placement Plan. Where it is agreed that it is appropriate for a young person to manage some of the personal allowance this must never exceed more than 50% of the total personal allowance and there continues to be a requirement to account for the spending.
- 2.2.8 The personal allowance should be administered to meet the child's needs. This could include, although this is not an exhaustive list:
- mobile phones (pay as you go only - NOT contract);
 - photographs;
 - clothes including school uniform;
 - spectacles;
 - nappies;
 - clubs;

- toys; educational toys and equipment including sports equipment;
- school equipment/bags etc.;
- school trips and other family trips;
- activities/hobbies/interests;
- cinema trips;
- pocket money;
- contribution to ink costs if the costs are above the norm;
- personal items of choice e.g. expensive hair styling; specific brand toiletries;
- purchase of birthday and other celebratory presents for birth family and foster family as appropriate;
- additional holidays planned by the foster carer;
- top up holiday costs;
- top up transport costs as agreed with the child's social worker;
- costs associated with a child's move to a new placement e.g. suitcase, holdall;
- passports.
- Contribution to other items/ costs as reasonably agreed with the children's team/fostering service as part of placement planning.

2.2.9 Where personal allowance held by the carer accrues to over £500 then the excess over and above this amount should be returned to the Placement Hub unless there has been an agreement with the child's social worker that monies are saved for specific purposes i.e. driving lessons, additional holiday costs. The point at which this should be done should be discussed with the fostering social worker and paid back as advised. (See Section 5).

2.2.10 Where a child is placed and has very limited belongings, the possibility of an advance payment can be discussed with the children's team as part of placement planning. This will then be reclaimed through ongoing personal allowance payments.

2.2.11 For activities, the carer would usually be required to cover their own costs (e.g. entrance fees) from maintenance. If there are exceptional costs for a carer to support a child to undertake a specific child-related activity due to the child's needs, this should be discussed with fostering social worker and the child's social worker. Consideration may be given to some contribution from the personal allowance or DLA if appropriate.

2.3 Pocket money/personal spending

2.3.1 Pocket money should be paid in line with the allowances table in the [fostering allowances table](#). Arrangements for administering this should be discussed by

the foster carer, social worker and child where they are of an appropriate age or ability. The payment of pocket money should be 'signed for' by the young person wherever possible. Prior agreement should be gained from the child's social worker for single item expenditures over £100.

2.4 Long term savings

2.4.1 Long term savings are deducted from the personal allowances at source.

2.4.2 Long term savings will only be required for children aged over 5 years who have been in care for a continuous period of 12 months.

2.4.3 In the case of children aged 5 or over who have been in care continuously for 12 months or more, accumulated long term savings will be transferred in January and July of each year into a Junior ISA or Child Trust Fund set up for the individual child concerned.

2.4.4 Where a foster carer is caring for a child aged 5 or more who has not been in care continuously for 12 months, the carer will receive the 10% savings element (which is not deducted as long term savings) this will show on their pay slip as the 'Initial Placement Allowance'.

IMPORTANT: The Initial Placement Allowance is paid for children aged 5 years or more for the first 365 consecutive days of a child being in care i.e. the criteria for payment is based on the length of time the child has been in care irrespective of where they are placed and is to be used as part of the personal allowance.

2.4.5 For young people aged 16 years who meet the 12-month requirement the 10% savings element will be paid into a "z account" so that it can be used in support of preparing a young person for independence. The use of this money should be incorporated into pathway planning and take account of the young person's views.

2.5 Holiday allowance

2.5.1 This allowance is paid in accordance with the age groupings identified by the [Fostering Network](#).

2.5.2 For any children already in a foster home this will be paid in June. Foster carers can request an early payment within the same financial year which will need to be authorised by the children's team operations manager.

- 2.5.3 The holiday allowance will only be paid once per year for a child. If a child moves from one carer to another, then if the allowance is unspent or partly spent it should be returned. This should be monitored through the end of placement process (See section 5). The monies will be paid back to Warwickshire County Council and then paid back out to the foster carer for the ongoing placement.
- 2.5.4 Foster carer's existing holiday commitments should be discussed prior to placement and at the placement planning meeting. Children should be included in holiday plans wherever possible.
- 2.5.5 In the event of a placement ending before the holiday and where a deposit has been made, consideration will be given to reimbursements of payments made if appropriate. This will be a discussion with fostering and the children's team.
- 2.5.6 Where the holiday allowance is not being spent on a family holiday away from the foster home, the money should be set aside for other holiday periods, including school half-term breaks and other festivals.
- 2.5.7 The holiday allowance can be used flexibly if needed to support non-residential leisure opportunities in holiday periods, in consultation with fostering and the children's team.
- 2.5.8 Foster carers should not book holidays during term time as the children and young people should not be out of school.
- 2.5.9 Where a young person wants to use their holiday allowance to take a holiday, separate from that organised by the foster family, this should be discussed with their social worker who should be mindful that if this money is used for a separate holiday to the carer then the foster carer may not be in a position to include a young person in their family holiday.
- 2.5.10 If holiday costs are greater than the holiday allowance, then consideration can be given to transfer from the personal allowance, if the child's needs are otherwise met (e.g. they have enough clothing and ongoing opportunities for leisure etc). This needs to be in consultation with the child's social worker and agreement recorded.
- 2.5.11 If the personal holiday choice of the foster carers dictates that the holiday allowance/available personal allowance does not cover the costs for a child, this is the carers' own decision. As such there are no additional funds available to support this and use of the maintenance should be considered.

2.5.12 When 'costing' a shared holiday, for example a caravan in the UK, foster carers are responsible for their own costs and for their family members. A proportion of transport costs and accommodation per person should be calculated and receipts made available for accounting of allowances.

2.5.13 Where the foster carer owns the accommodation, no costs for accommodation should be claimed from the holiday allowance, but proportionate travel costs can be considered.

2.5.14 Any exceptional circumstances regarding the use of holiday allowance should be discussed with fostering and child's social worker, and agreements recorded.

2.6 Birthday allowance

2.6.1 Birthday allowances are paid for children who are in a foster home on their birthday and are included in the payment period prior to their birthday.

2.6.2 For the allowance payable refer to the current [fostering allowances table](#).

2.6.3 The allowance is to be utilised for one or more of the following:

- Gift;
- Activity;
- Party/celebration.

2.6.4 Children should be actively involved in the decision-making where appropriate, subject to age, ability and maturity.

2.6.5 Birthday allowances are expected to be spent in addition to any gifts, including money and other celebrations organised by a child's birth/adoptive family.

2.7 Festival allowance

2.7.1 The festival allowance is paid to enable foster carers to ensure that the religious beliefs and cultural heritage of children who are in care are promoted and supported. Prior Agreement should be gained from Child's SW for single item expenditures over £100.

2.7.2 For any children already in a foster home this will be paid in November (unless otherwise advised). Foster carers can request an early payment within the same financial year which will need to be authorised by the children's team operations manager.

2.7.3 Where children move between foster homes or return home, any gifts purchased from this allowance will move with them.

2.7.4 The allowance can be used flexibly to cover more than one festival.

3. Additional costs

3.1 Education transport

3.1.1 Children of statutory school age (4-16 years) who live more than 3 miles from their school (2 miles for children under 8), are entitled to free school transport. These children are known as eligible children.

3.1.2 It is important that when foster carers are liaising with the Placement Hub, they consider whether they can transport the foster child to school. The assumption is that for most eligible children the foster carer will provide the transport in the absence of a school bus or travel voucher.

3.1.3 In this case, the social worker and the foster carer will complete a school [transport enquiry form](#) for each child (Form F1). This should be signed by the operations manager for the children's team. The social worker will send this to the Education Transport Service (educationtransport@warwickshire.gov.uk) who will investigate whether there is a more cost-effective option e.g. a school bus and will offer advice.

3.1.4 Where there is no more cost-effective option the foster carer will provide the transport and will be able to reclaim the cost. The service will pay for 2 return journeys per day for every day the child attends. The current rate is 40 pence per mile for one child. This is adjusted where more than one child is transported. If children's specific needs impact on the transport choices (for example a child who may be unable to use public transport), this should be discussed in the placement planning process.

3.1.5 Transport arrangements will be recorded in the child's placement plan. Carers will claim using the [Travel Allowance Claim form](#) which can also be found on the [WeLearn platform](#) or from their fostering social workers. Carers will claim retrospectively each half term. Foster carers will also need to complete a Transport Application [Finance Form](#).

3.1.6 For carers who are unable to transport a child, this will be recorded in the placement plan and the social worker will complete a school transport request

form. School Organisation and Planning Service will then arrange suitable provision.

3.2 Passports

- 3.2.1 The cost of the passport would normally be met from the personal allowance. In exceptional circumstances where a child has been recently placed with carers who are due to go on holiday and there are no accrued allowances the children's team may pay.
- 3.2.2 The passport should be kept safely and will be regarded as the personal property of the child.

3.3 Birth certificates

- 3.3.1 Every effort should be made to secure a child's birth certificate either when they initially come into care or as soon after as possible (by the children's team). The original copy should always be kept on the child's file and if given to a foster carer for a specific purpose, it must be returned to the child's social worker once the foster carer no longer requires it.

3.4 Childcare/nursery costs

- 3.4.1 Children aged 3-4 and are entitled to 15 hours free pre-school provision. Whenever possible carers should use a Warwickshire County Council nursery where a place is available. If carers live outside of the county, they should apply to their relevant local authority to obtain the same entitlement.
- 3.4.2 Some children age 2 are entitled to 15 hours free pre-school provision. To check eligibility please contact [Childcare Funding for 2 year olds](#)
- 3.4.3 Foster carers will be responsible for the first £50 per week of any child care costs unless it has been assessed, agreed and confirmed in the placement plan that the child should attend pre-school provision to promote their development, skills and learning over and above what would normally be provided within the foster home in terms of providing stimulation, play and social opportunities for the child; or
- 3.4.4 The children's team may contribute to childcare costs in exceptional circumstances, but this must be agreed in the child's placement plan. Exceptional circumstances would be where a carer: -
- has other regular paid employment; **and**

- takes a pre-school child outside of their usual approval category in an emergency; **or**
- when there is no other placement available; **or**
- to enable a sibling group to remain together;

3.4.5 Children in foster care will also be eligible for the extended 30 hours entitlement if it is consistent with the child's care plan **AND** the foster carers are in paid employment **outside** of being a foster parent. Foster parents should contact the child's social worker for an application form. This is returned to Annette Easto for processing.

- This is checked against the relevant criteria and sent to the Early years Funding Office.
- A '30-hour code' is generated and the foster carer is emailed with a letter confirming the code and dates applicable.
- This is subject to review on a 3-monthly basis.

3.5 School meals

3.5.1 In England, all infant pupils (reception, year one and two) in state funded schools can have a free lunch.

3.5.2 As fostering allowances do include an element for food, (maintenance) applications for free school meals for other children would need to be checked with the local authority when progressing a claim in relation to a child. Queries can be discussed with the free school meals team, freemeals@warwickshire.gov.uk, or on 01926 742543.

3.5.3 In Warwickshire, foster carers are welcome to apply in their own name, however they will not automatically be entitled and need to be receiving one of the following qualifying benefits:

- income support;
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA);
- income-related employment and support allowance (ESA);
- guarantee element of state pension credit;
- Universal Credit (with an annual income of less than £7,400);
- Both income-based and contribution-based JSA/ESA if foster carers receive the same amount for both. Foster carers should also qualify if they receive both, but the income-based amount is greater, but not if the contribution-based amount is greater;
- Families who are awarded Child Tax Credit and have an annual income, as assessed by HMRC, not in excess of £16,190 are also eligible to claim free school meals providing there is no entitlement to Working Tax Credit (unless in respect of a 4-week 'run-on').

3.5.4 As with any issues related to benefits, current advice should be sought by the foster carer.

4. Other child related payments

4.1 Fostering equipment

4.1.1 Warwickshire County Council fostering services will look to provide carers with any equipment which is essential to them undertaking the care of children and young people effectively and safely. Only brand-new items can be reimbursed, NOT second hand.

4.1.2 Relevant items are as listed below:

- bed and bedding;
- car seat or booster seat;
- smoke alarms;
- stair gate;
- buggy;
- cot and mattress; (A new cot mattress should be provided for each new placement in line with current medical advice);
- clothing storage space, e.g. wardrobe and drawers;
- mattress protectors;
- carbon monoxide detectors;
- aids for children with disabilities who cannot have this supplied by health or occupational health;
- steriliser and other such essential items needed for the placement of a baby.

4.1.3 For approved carers, the process to claim for equipment is for the fostering social worker to email the receipt to the business support colleague for their team. This should include details of the carer and specific items claimed. If there are additional necessary costs the Fostering Operations Manager will consider on an individual basis. If agreed, a payment will then be made directly to the carer.

4.1.4 In all cases, there is a maximum amount for reimbursement, and if a foster carer chooses items that exceed this amount, this is by personal choice and will not be reimbursed or deducted from personal allowance unless agreed by the Fostering Operations manager (see above).

4.1.5 In the event that fostering equipment will be a significant expenditure and the foster carer requires this to be provided directly (rather than self-purchased and

reclaimed) then the fostering social worker is to liaise with the Fostering Operations Manager, and an order can be arranged in consultation with business support.

4.2 Foster carer's insurance

- 4.2.1 All Warwickshire foster carers will be provided with the [Foster Carer Insurance](#) guidance. This is available on the WeLearn platform and on the [intranet](#).
- 4.2.2 Foster carers are responsible for informing their own insurers (for both home and car) that they are fostering.
- 4.2.3 In the event of loss or damage to property, Foster carers should advise their fostering social worker and child's social worker of the incident on the same day, or next working day.
- 4.2.4 Foster carers must contact their own Insurers to make a claim initially. Reasons why claims are not accepted need to be provided in writing. The fostering team will consider making a claim in line with their insurance policy. Three written quotes will be required.
- 4.2.5 Foster carers need to understand that claims will need to be assessed as reasonable for reimbursement. Fostering involves a certain amount of day to day "wear and tear" in the same way that it might for a foster carer's own children, additionally accidents can happen. Before making a claim, foster carers should discuss this with their fostering social worker.
- 4.2.6 With regard to insurance for legal advice or representation foster carers are responsible for their own and it is strongly recommended that they ensure this is in place. Cover is available through: -
- [Fostering Network](#)
 - [Foster Talk](#)
- 4.2.6 Neither the fostering team nor Warwickshire County Council arranged insurance provides cover or indemnifies the foster carers for loss of cash, loss of or damage to foster carers' motor vehicles or any claims arising from the use of a motor vehicle.

5. Children and young people moving on

5.1 Moving to another foster home

- 5.1.1 At the end of a placement any unspent and accrued allowances must be returned to the Placement Hub. This includes personal, birthday, holiday and festival allowances.
- 5.1.2 The allowances can be returned by Placement Hub arranging a 'clawback' from future allowances, if there are ongoing placements. Alternatively, a cheque payable to Warwickshire County Council can be sent to Placement Hub.
- 5.1.3 Details for return of allowances should be agreed in the End of Placement discussion/meeting and if a cheque is returned, a receipt should be signed by both carer and social worker acknowledging what has been collected. One copy is to stay with the carer and one copy is for the child's file.
- 5.1.4 In the event of a 'clawback' being agreed, the fostering social worker is to confirm with Placement Hub the details of the repayment amounts, including name of child and breakdown of allowances returned.
(placementmoves@warwickshire.gov.uk)
- 5.1.5 A further possibility if preferred is for a direct bank transfer from the foster carer to Warwickshire County Council. If this is the preferred option, then the fostering social worker is to liaise with placement Hub to make arrangements.

5.2 Moving on to independence/leaving care including university

- 5.2.1 For young people aged 16-18 years it may be appropriate to use some savings to purchase items and equipment for independent living accommodation. This must be discussed and agreed in the Pathway Plan.
- 5.2.2 As part of planning, the future management of a child's savings must be discussed, and the agreement recorded on Mosaic by the child's social worker.

5.3 Child going from one Warwickshire approved foster carer to another for respite care

- 5.3.1 Where respite arrangements are agreed via Placement Hub, respite carers would be paid their full skill level fee and also the maintenance allowance, pro-rata for the number of days a child is placed with them.

- 5.3.2 The foster carer who is having the respite will cease to receive their skill fee but will continue to receive full personal allowance. The maintenance allowance will be reduced pro rata for the period whilst the child is away.
- 5.3.3 Carers of children/young people going for respite should provide some personal allowance (including the pocket money element) to a respite carer, especially where the respite carer intends to take the child on a significant outing or activity. Arrangements should be agreed between the carers, fostering and the child's social worker. Allowances should continue to be accounted for by the relevant carer.
- 5.3.4 Where a short stay not exceeding 3 nights is arranged directly between the carers in a 'buddy' style arrangement, payments can be arranged between the carers. The child's social worker and fostering social worker should be notified of such arrangements.
- 5.3.5 For stays exceeding 3 nights, or where payments are requested to be arranged via the Placement Hub, a referral to Placement Hub will be required from the child's social worker.

5.4 Short periods away from the foster home

- 5.4.1 Foster carers will continue to receive full fostering allowances when children and young people have occasional overnight stays with friends or family members.
- 5.4.2 In some circumstances following agreement and discussion with the child's social worker it may be reasonable and/or appropriate for parents to be given money from the personal allowance to buy clothing items which the child requires. In these circumstances there should be agreement about what is a reasonable amount to be spent and the parent should provide a receipt to the carer when the child returns. Children should also be allowed to take with them some of the personal allowance for pocket money or activities.
- 5.4.3 Please see [Short Periods away from the Foster Placement](#) for further information about decision making about day to day arrangements for the child/young person, including education, leisure activities, overnight stays, holidays etc.

5.5 Placement retained for a specific child

5.5.1 There will be occasions when the child is staying elsewhere, and it is appropriate for the foster carer to continue receiving the full allowance and full skill fee as the placement is to remain open for a specifically named child at the request of children's services. These would include:

- Child missing from placement (absconded) - allowance and fees are payable for the first 7 days and then are subject to an operations manager's discretion.
- Child having significant periods with their family as part of a rehabilitation plan. The period for this would have to be incorporated into placement planning and be agreed by an operations manager. Again, this arrangement would be expected to be time limited.
- Child has returned home but it has been agreed to hold the foster home open to be confident that the rehabilitation plan is likely to work, and the child is not likely to return to foster care in the short term. In this case allowances and full skill level fee would normally be paid for no longer than two weeks.

5.5.2 In any of the above circumstances the child's room/bed is not to be used for any other children who are in care whilst the child is away from the foster home.

6. Parent and child support placements

([Please refer to parent and child specialist scheme procedure](#) for parent and child assessment placements)

6.1 When parent and child in in care

6.1.1 The foster carer will receive the fostering allowances and skills level fee in respect of both the parent and their child.

6.2 Where only the child is in care – parent 16+

6.2.1 The foster carer will receive the fostering allowance and skills level payment in respect of the child.

6.2.2 Where the parent is over 18 years but had previously been in care by the same carer [Staying Put procedures](#) apply.

6.2.3 Where the parent is over 18 years but not previously in care by the same carer:

- A total of £180 will be paid.
- Where the parent is eligible to claim housing benefit and/or income support or is working they will make the same contribution as is required under [Staying Put procedures](#).
- Any balance of the £180 total payment not met by housing benefit or the parent will be met by the children's team responsible for the child placed.

6.3 Where only the mother is in care (the child is in the same placement but is not in care)

6.3.1 The foster carer will receive the fostering allowance and skills level fee in respect of the parent

6.3.2 In respect of the child the foster carer will receive:

- 50% of their fee from section 17; paid for by the relevant children's team.
- the full fostering allowances minus any benefits which the parent will receive in respect of their child.

6.3.3 In these circumstances the parent is responsible for the care and welfare of their child with the foster carer's role to support and advise. The foster placement should be underpinned by a clear placement plan that details financial arrangements and responsibilities in terms of purchasing items for the child and how the allowances/benefits will be managed between the parent and foster carer.

7. Children with disabilities in receipt of disability living allowance or Personal Independence Payments

7.1 Disability Living Allowance/PIP

7.1.1 [Disability Living Allowance \(DLA\)](#) for children may help with the extra costs of looking after a child who:

- is under 16

- has difficulties walking or needs more looking after than a child of the same age who doesn't have a disability

7.1.2 They will need to meet all the [eligibility requirements](#).

7.1.3 Children and young people under the age of 16 cannot claim DLA for themselves. Instead an adult 'appointee' must make the claim for the child.

7.1.4 Foster carers are the appropriate people to claim DLA for a child under the age of 16 years old who is living with them. If a foster carer is uncertain regarding this process, the fostering support worker can be consulted.

7.1.5 Any fostering allowances received will not affect the claim for the child because children who are 'in care' can receive DLA if they are living in a private household. However, DLA should not be used for any items of expenditure that would normally be met from the fostering allowance. It can be used however to purchase items over and above what would be normally required for a looked after child who does not have a disability e.g. incontinence pads for an older child; the child's disability means that they are wearing out clothes and shoes over and above what would be considered normal wear and tear etc.

7.1.6 If the child receives the care component at the middle or higher rate foster carers may also be able to claim [Carer's Allowance](#) in their own right.

7.1.7 Once a child reaches the age of 16, they will continue to receive DLA until the benefit is reviewed. They can then apply for Personal Independence Payment. The child will get a letter inviting them to apply for PIP shortly after their 16th birthday. The DLA payment will stop unless an application for PIP is made by the date in the letter.

7.2 Appropriate examples of expenditure, which must be to meet the additional costs designed around the child's disability

7.2.1 These include:

- Purchase of specific equipment or to meet additional costs to promote and enhance a child's social, leisure and educational development e.g. additional clothing required to support a child in pursuing an interest or activity, expenses associated in accompanying a child to an event or occasion (theatre, cinema).
- Additional costs for activity holiday specifically designed around the child's disability.

- Specialist play or sensory equipment, (tricycle, lighting) adapted equipment e.g.: ICT. Therapeutic treatments, massages, aromatherapy etc. Alternative creative outlets, horse riding, play schemes, clubs, and sports.
- Additional costs involved to enable a child to celebrate special occasions, religious or otherwise.
- Paying for sitting service for a child who requires a level of supervision more than that normally given to a child of the same age.
- Additional/exceptional household costs incurred to promote the child's health and well-being e.g. heating, additional use of washing machine.

7.3 Mobility component

7.3.1 The mobility component of the DLA will not be considered when calculating fostering allowances for the child.

7.3.2 Appropriate examples of expenditure, which must be intended to meet additional costs, designed around the child's disability:

- Use of taxis, volunteer drivers etc. to enable a child to attend appointments and leisure activities where children or young people are prevented from traveling on public transport due to access issues;
- Additional travel costs for carers to accompany a child to an event or activity if it is not appropriate for the child to travel unaccompanied due to their level of disability;
- To attend frequent hospital appointments;
- Specially fitted car seats beyond those required to meet legislation on car safety seats;

7.4 Management of payments

7.4.1 Under no circumstances should fostering allowances be reduced if a child receives DLA.

7.4.2 Whilst foster carers are not required to keep an account of how the DLA is spent, it is recommended that they do so. The fostering social worker and the child's social worker will want to monitor and ensure DLA funding is being used appropriately. Foster carers should therefore discuss how the money is to be spent as part of the professional working relationship and

where age and developmentally appropriate the child should be involved in the discussion about how DLA can be used.

8. Management of allowances

8.1 Receipts

- 8.1.1 All receipts are to be retained by the foster carers and it is advised that each receipt is given a number, which is logged on to the appropriate record sheet next to the item and on the back of the receipt. This will make a receipt easier to find when it is requested by a social worker.
- 8.1.2 Receipts should be kept for 5 years. Electronic receipts are permissible and should be available when requested by a social worker.

8.2 Record sheets and making accounts available for inspection

- 8.2.1 These are to be completed regarding income and expenditure related to personal allowance. In addition, separate sheets for holiday, birthday and festival allowances are to be completed. An example sheet is attached at Appendix A.
- 8.2.2 The fostering social worker will review the allowance recording as part of the standard supervision agenda. Children's social workers should also be proactive to monitor the allowance records.
- 8.2.3 A separate sheet is required for each child.
- 8.2.4 Wherever possible children should be encouraged to sign the expenditure sheet with the foster carer. This will help the carer to:
- demonstrate what the money has been used for and thereby reduce any risk of complaint;
 - ensure that the young person is aware of financial management and the importance of financial planning and budgetary planning;
 - facilitate budgetary skills, particularly with older young people;
 - evidence expenditure for the fostering social worker and the child's social worker who will monitor and 'sign off' allowance forms in supervision and statutory visits.
- 8.2.5 Any changes to any agreements should be recorded and placed on the child and foster carers file.

- 8.2.6 Foster carers can purchase any single item up to the value of £100 before requiring social worker approval.
- 8.2.7 Respite arrangements should be clearly communicated to Placement hub to ensure that payments are correct (see Section 5.3)

8.3 Management of over payments

- 8.3.1 Whilst the department endeavours to ensure that pay to carers is accurate unfortunately errors do occur. Carers are responsible for checking their own pay slip. If there is an overpayment, they must contact Placement Hub admin on 02476 754157 immediately
- 8.3.2 Where overpayments are identified they are recovered from the carer according to the following rules: -
- If the overpayment is 100% or less than the total payment to the carer for that fortnight then it is automatically deducted from that fortnight's payment.
 - If the overpayment is more than 100% of the total payment to the carer for that fortnight then Finance will notify the fostering team leaders/operations managers by e-mail of the overpayment. If no response is received from the team within 24 hours an invoice will be raised. A copy of the invoice and supporting documentation will be sent to the team for information.
 - If there is no payment to the carer within the fortnight then an invoice for the overpayment will be raised to the carer. This will happen once the steps as outlined above have been actioned.

9. Internal foster care allowances

[Internal Foster care Allowances](#)

10. Further information

[Information for Foster Carers – GOV.UK](#)
[Fostering guidance and procedures](#)

Appendix A

Child/young person's allowance record of expenditure

Name of Carer Mrs Hope

Fortnightly Personal & clothing allowance: £95.68

Name of Child Sarah

D.O.B

25.12.11

AGE

8

Date Payment Received	Amount Received	Receipt No.	Item bought or expenditure	Cost	Balance Amount Unspent	Signature Child Young Person (subject to age and ability) or CSW or FSW
20.12.13	£95.68	0	Pocket money for two weeks	£7.76	£87.92	
		1	Socks and T shirt	£15	£72.92	
		2	Hair cut	£7.50	£65.42	
		3	School trip	£20	£45.42	
		4	Top up for mobile	£15	£30.42	
3.1.14	£95.68				£126.10	
		0	Pocket Money for two weeks	£7.76	£118.34	