FOSTER CARER PAYMENTS AND ALLOWANCES

We are delighted to present our updated payments and allowances for 2026/27.

At Leicestershire County council, we understand that people foster because they care, and they want to make a difference to Leicestershire's' children and young people in care.

However, we also understand that it is vital that our carers receive payment for their skills, efforts and work with us – we all have bills to pay!

Our payment levels enable our carers to progress, with our support and guidance and receive fair payment for their vital roles.

As members of The Fostering Network, our carers will also have access to offers and reductions including mortgage deals, house insurance offers and reduced admittance to theme parks.

We also believe that payment is not just about the money. It is vital that our carers are supported in their role. This is why every carer will have their own supervising social worker, access to support 24/7 and our dedicated support team – who offer additional support to carers as well as our very popular annual Foster carer's awards events and foster carer fun days throughout the year.

Most foster carers do not have to pay income tax on their earnings. They will receive a tax-free allowance of **£20,440** and an additional weekly allowance based on the child or young person. We can provide information and support to help you understand this further should you wish. Please see: Foster carers Tax arrangements 2026-27.

As you will see below, there are many other ways that Leicestershire County Council supports you to look after our children for example, uniform and clothing allowances as well as our birthday allowance to ensure our children and young people get to enjoy their special days too.

We know that thinking about fostering and how the payments could work out can be quite complicated! So, please let us know if you would like us to go through them with you.

Please get in touch and we can explain the payment process to help you to consider the financial side of fostering on 0116 305 05 05 or send us an email: fostering@leics.gov.uk

Weekly Fostering Allowance:

The weekly fostering allowance is the amount that is paid to foster carers whilst they have a child in their care and does not include the skills fee that they are paid in addition to this. These rates are **free from income tax**, as long as they do not exceed the qualifying amount.

AGE OF CHILD	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	ANNUAL
0-4 years	£182.00	**£788.67**	**£9,464.00**
5-10 years	£201.00	**£871.00**	**£10,452.00**
11-15 years	£227.00	**£983.67**	**£11,804.00**
16+ years	£267.00	**£1157.00**	**£13,884.00**

+ Your skills Fee:

The skills fee is an amount paid on top of the fostering allowance to recognise the carers' skills, experience, learning and development. All mainstream foster carers will start on level 1 and will progress through the levels when they have met the competencies, training and development requirements for each level.

		Age 0-4	Age 5-10	Age 11-15	Age 16+
Level 1	Weekly skills fee	£45.50	£50.25	£56.75	£66.75
	Weekly Fostering allowance	£182.00	£201.00	£227.00	£267.00
	Weekly Level 1 total	£227.50	£251.25	£283.75	£333.75
	Annual Level 1 total	£11,830.00	£13,065.00	£14,755.00	£17,355.00
		Age 0-4	**Age 5-10**	**Age 11-15**	**Age 16+**
Level 2	Weekly skills fee	£91.00	£100.50	£113.50	£133.50
	Weekly Fostering allowance	£182.00	£201.00	£227.00	£267.00
	Weekly Level 2 total	£273.00	£301.50	£340.50	£400.50
	Annual Level 2 total	£14,196.00	£15,678.00	£17,706.00	£20,826.00
		Age 0-4	**Age 5-10**	**Age 11-15**	**Age 16+**
Level 3	Weekly skills fee	£136.50	£150.75	£170.25	£200.25
	Weekly Fostering allowance	£182.00	£201.00	£227.00	£267.00
	Weekly Level 3 total	£318.50	£351.75	£397.25	£467.25
	Annual Level 3 total	£16,562.00	£18,291.00	£20,657.00	£24,297.00
		Age 0-4	**Age 5-10**	**Age 11-15**	**Age 16+**
Level 4	Weekly skills fee	£254.80	£281.40	£317.80	£373.80
	Weekly Fostering allowance	£182.00	£201.00	£227.00	£267.00
	Weekly Level 4 total	£436.80	£482.40	£544.80	£640.80
	Annual Level 4 total	£22,713.60	£25,084.80	£28,329.60	£33,321.60

Other Allowances

1. **Set up allowance**
   An allowance of **£374.70** is available to all newly approved foster carers to help with getting the basics ready for their fostering role.

2. **Clothing Allowance**
   In cases where children or young people arrive in an emergency with no clothing, or inadequate clothing, a payment of **up to £198.50 for each child** can be made direct to the foster carer.

3. **School Uniform Allowance**
   The department provides additional help with school uniform when:
   - A child starts primary school (when a grant of **£138.80** is paid).
   - A child changes school (the grant will depend on what clothing the child already has and what they need for the new school).
   - A child starts secondary education (a grant of **£198.50** is paid).

4. **Birthday Allowance**
   The Birthday Allowance is equal to one week's Fostering Allowance and is paid automatically just before the child's birthday for gifts and celebrations.

5. **Festival Allowance**
   The Festival Allowance is equal to one week's Fostering Allowance and is paid automatically at the beginning of December. If you would like it to be paid instead for another major religious festival please let your supervising social worker know.

6. **Holiday Allowance**
   These payments are age-related and are based on two weeks of the basic fostering allowance. Payments will not be made automatically, but will have to be claimed by foster carers at the appropriate time.

7. **School Trips Abroad**
   Educational trips for children are important for their development and consideration should be given to a number of possible funding sources including pupil premiums, a child's Personal Education Allowance (PEA), corporate parenting team and fostering allowances that carers receive, including the holiday allowance.

Specialist Level Care

1. **One2One / Aspire carers**
   Retainer fee of £877.00 per week when there is not a child placed, and the age-related fostering allowance is paid in addition while a child is living with you.

2. **Pathway Carers**
   Carers are paid £586.10 per week that a child is living with you plus the fostering allowance.

3. **Short Breaks**
   There are two levels of short break carers which reflect the complexity of the child or young person's disability and care needs:

Short Breaks (daily rate)

Level 1	£185.00

Short Breaks (daily rate)

Level 2	£255.90

4. **Parent & Child**

   Parent & child carers will receive a mainstream level 3 payment including the national minimum age related allowance for the child. The carer will also receive a fee of £579.90 for the adult. Additional parent in placement will be paid at a flat rate of £281.50 per week.

5. **Bridging carers**

   Bridging carers are paid £500.00 per week in addition to the fostering allowance for the child based on their age, while a child in living with them.

6. **Supported Lodging Hosts**

   SLPs are paid £328.20 per week when a young person is living with them.

7. **Supported Lodgings Plus Hosts**

   SLP+ Hosts are paid £644.30 per week, plus mileage when a young person is living with them.

8. **Staying Put**

   Staying Put carers are paid £328.20 per week when the young person is living with them.

9. **IFA & OLA Transfers**

   After an initial visit has been carried out to establish the needs of any children in potential carers' care and their suitability to foster with LCC, an individual offer will be made to potential carers.

Additional information regarding payments and allowances is available.