

## **Appendix 1**

### **ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL Fees and Allowances for Foster Carers June 2016 to March 2017**

Rotherham Council, as a developing ‘Child Centred Borough’, has a strong resounding ambition to move away from the legacy of poorly performing services to a position of strength and confidence, which is reflected in the intention of the Children and Young People’s Services Directorate to become rated ‘outstanding’ by 2018.

#### **1. Summary of the Scheme**

This scheme is designed to offer clarity and be simple and efficient to administer.

#### **2.1 Age Based Child Allowance**

All foster carers, at every level, are entitled to this allowance for each of the children they care for. The allowance is designed to meet the costs of caring for a child in care.

The allowance is a weekly amount based on the age of the child, and is above the Government National Minimum payments for foster carers.

Payments are made weekly. This is directly into the foster carer’s bank account, and the amount is as follows:

<b>Age Group:</b>	<b>Weekly Allowance Rate</b>
<b>0 to 4</b>	<b>Total £133.54</b> (of which £9.75 is clothing allowance and £1.94 is the child's pocket money) (Basic Rate £121.85)
<b>5 to 10</b>	<b>£152.12</b> (of which £9.75 is clothing allowance and £4.39 is the child's pocket money) (Basic Rate £137.98)
<b>11 to 15</b>	<b>£189.37</b> (of which £12.65 is clothing allowance and £8.64 is the young person's pocket money) (Basic Rate £168.08)
<b>16+</b>	<b>£230.30</b> (of which £12.65 is clothing allowance and £11.39 is the young person's pocket money) (Basic Rate £206.25)

The following is a breakdown of how what the child's allowance should be used to cover:

- Food
- Toiletries, including medication, the majority of which is available at no additional cost
- Toys and play equipment
- School trips, some residential trips. (If the foster carer feels the cost of this is beyond funding through the fostering allowance, discussion needs to take place with the child's social worker or with the school in respect of use of pupil premium)
- Activities – the cost should not be a barrier to child undertaking a regular activity as agreed in their care plan. Funding would be agreed as part of the care planning process. (If the foster carer feels the cost of this is beyond funding through the fostering allowance, discussion needs to take place with the child's social worker)
- Clothing – see section 3
- Pocket money – see section 5
- Mobile phone top ups
- Bus fares and mileage to school within a 3 mile roundtrip
- Contribution to household costs, for example, heating, lighting
- Day to day transport, either by car or public transport
- Family day trips
- Personal allowance for social activities e.g. cinema, bowling, swimming
- General appointments local to the placement. (If the foster carer feels the cost of this is beyond funding through the fostering allowance, discussion needs to take place with the child's social worker due to complex health needs )

***This list is not exhaustive. Further guidance can be obtained from your supervising social worker.***

**2.2. In addition, foster carers receive the following one-off allowances for each child/ young person in your care on an annual basis:**

Age:	Birthday Allowance	Cultural Celebration	Holiday Allowance
<b>0 to 4</b>	121.85	182.77	243.70
<b>5 to 10</b>	137.98	206.97	275.96
<b>11 to 15</b>	168.08	252.13	336.17
<b>16+</b>	206.25	309.39	412.51

These payments are paid in relation to the (child) holiday payments which will be made in June this is in relation to the child. 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.

Any additional payment to be made for the child to have a holiday is to be agreed by the Service Manager before any booking is made.

Birthday payments will be paid within 1 month prior to the child's birthday Cultural celebration payments will be made on 1<sup>st</sup> December or as agreed with the team manager. These payments cover the additional expenditure at birthdays or cultural celebrations.

### **3 Clothing Allowance**

An initial clothing allowance is **not** paid automatically. This is subject to the needs of the child and is discussed with the supervising social worker and child's social worker when a child is first placed.

Expenditure is subject to fostering team manager and family placements and residential service manager approval.

When an agreement has been made to pay an initial clothing grant this will be subject to the needs of the child and in exceptional circumstances the full initial clothing allowance will be made. In any event the initial clothing grant cannot exceed the amounts listed below

The following figures should **not** be considered as an amount of payment that the child is entitled to.

Clothing	
Age	Amount
<b>0 to 11</b>	<b>£75</b>
<b>11+</b>	<b>£200</b>

***This payment is only paid when the child is first admitted in to care. The purchasing of additional clothes is then to be budgeted from the weekly allowance.***

## **School Uniform**

Allowances for school uniform can be negotiated when a child is first accommodated and if they change schools and require a different uniform. This will need discussion with the supervising social worker and is not automatically paid. If receipts are not provided the payment will not be made and will not be reimbursed by the Fostering Service.

An initial cost of up to £50 will be considered for a child aged up to 10 years and £70 for a child aged 10 plus

Funding the further replacement and purchasing of school uniform should be discussed with the fostering social worker as the weekly clothing monies should contribute towards replacement school uniforms and is the responsibility of the foster carer and should be budgeted from the weekly allowance.

## **Recommended Weekly Pocket Money Rates**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Weekly Pocket Money</b>
	<b>£</b>
0 - 4 years	1.94
5 -10 Years	4.39
11 - 15 years	8.64
16 +	11.39

All children should receive the weekly pocket money payment. This should either be given to the child or placed in their savings account. Pocket money is not to be confused with other expenditure given to the child for activities. For any child in a placement of more than 16 weeks the foster carer is expected to open a bank account for savings. For children in short term placements any money not given in hand will be saved and recorded. This will be handed to the child or new foster carer when the child moves.

## **Activities**

It is expected that foster carers encourage all children and young people to take part in a range of regular activities such as music and sports. Foster carers are expected to fund these from the weekly child allowance. Where a child's activity is significantly more expensive than the norm, a past example was where a young person was in

the UK national team and required significant more transport and equipment than is usual this should be discussed with the supervising social worker before committing to expenditure.

***All foster carers are expected to promote these activities.***

### **Transport Costs**

It is expected that the child's allowance will cover transport of up to 40 miles a week for journeys specific to the child. Where the child's transport requirements exceed this amount this should be discussed and agreed with the supervising social worker. Mileage over the 40 miles per week should be claimed at 40 pence per mile.

**Exceptions to this could include:**

- Regular contact with family / significant others
- Daily school journeys over and above the 3 mile round trip
- Other excessive journeys as agreed by the supervising social worker e.g. daily hospital visits, long distance journeys for contact.
- Introductions to a child that is not yet placed with the foster carer
- Training / support groups / consultations events
- Taking a child to respite
- Provision of family support

**The above should be agreed through care planning process and discussions with the child's social worker, within foster carers supervision and professional development plan. Any expenditure would be agreed beforehand**

### **Holiday, Birthday and Cultural Celebration Days**

<b>Age:</b>	Birthday Allowance	Cultural Celebration	Holiday Allowance
<b>0 to 4</b>	121.85	182.77	243.70
<b>5 to 10</b>	137.98	206.97	275.96
<b>11 to 15</b>	168.08	252.13	336.17
<b>16+</b>	206.25	309.39	412.51

### **Holiday Payments for Foster Carers**

***It is expected that foster carers, wherever possible, include their foster children on their family holidays which must be taken during the school holidays if the child is of school age.***

Foster carers are currently entitled to 2 weeks basic allowance. This excludes pocket money and clothing. This is paid during 2<sup>nd</sup> week in June or by request from fostering social worker. This money is to be used to take the child away or to arrange activities and day trips if a holiday is not planned.

Only in exceptional circumstances should the foster carer take a holiday without the child and the child has to be placed with an alternative foster carer. If you are planning a holiday without the child, you must speak with the child's social worker and your fostering social worker, so that a clear plan can be put in place.

If a Rotherham Borough Council respite carer is used, the primary carer will receive up to a maximum 14 days payment which includes basic rate, skills payment clothing and pocket money. The foster carer will not receive the basic allowance if they take a holiday that extends beyond the 14 day period. In effect this is the equivalent of two weeks paid holiday.

The respite carer will get basic rate in this period and the primary foster carer will be expected to ensure that the child or respite carer receives the child's pocket money. The respite carer will receive a skills level payment for this period if this is not already being paid to them as they are already caring for another child.

#### **4. Support, Respite and Day Care**

Respite care needs to be agreed with your fostering social worker and child's social worker prior to it taking place. Respite care is paid daily at the rate of one seventh of the task rate plus the skills level payment pro rata. Foster carers who provide day care for other foster children will receive a standard payment this is currently being paid at £3.50 per hour.

**Setting up allowance** (furniture and equipment) up to £500 discretionary payment to be approved by fostering team manager.

**Setting up allowance** (child) up to £500 discretionary payment to be approved by fostering team manager.

Receipts must be provided to the Fostering Service. Equipment purchased needs to be agreed with either the assessing social worker or the allocated supervising social worker. No grants will exceed the maximum allowance. The replacement of equipment is to be discussed with the SSW, team manager and ultimately any agreement for funding is at service manager level.

In the case of babies – it is expected that a new mattresses will be purchased for each new placement and the foster carer will be reimbursed.

Payment for items should not be made by credit card / debit card as the local authority is unable to claim back VAT. Generally any equipment would be bought through purchase to pay arrangements through contracted suppliers

## **13 Disability Living Allowance (DLA)**

This welfare benefit can be claimed for any child with a disability. The foster carer is expected to use the DLA to promote the welfare of the child and to assist them in the child's care. This should be paid in to a dedicated bank account in the name of the child with the agreement of the child's social worker.

The child's social worker is responsible for the oversight of its use in partnership with the foster carer.

Any surplus that is built up remains the property of the child and goes with the child when they leave the placement.

Any mobility allowances should be spent to promote the child's mobility.

It is best practice to keep good records within daily logs of expenditure of DLA and ensure that this is agreed with the child's social worker and supervising social worker

## **14 Overpayments**

On occasion a foster carer may mistakenly be overpaid. It is the foster carer's responsibility to notify Fostering Business Support as soon as possible. An agreement will then be made in regard to repaying the overpayment.

## **7. Tax**

All carers are responsible for all or any tax due by them to HM revenue and Customs and should ensure that they contact their local tax office to clarify their particular circumstances. Foster Carers should be registered with the tax office as self-employed.

## **4. Insurance Claims**

Foster carers will be expected to have the relevant insurance cover for any damage. It will only be in exceptional circumstances that an insurance claim can be made against Rotherham's public liability insurance. Such claims will be considered by the Fostering Service Manager.

All foster carers, where applicable, are expected to have a full driving licence and 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, renewal of insurance.

***These documents must be available for the supervising social worker to check as part of the Annual Health & Safety Check.***

### **3. Skills Level: Carer Fees:**

The Carer Fees for 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017 are summarised in the table below:

<b>Level:</b>	<b>Weekly Payment fee:</b>	<b>Carer category</b>
1	£ 100	Foster carer (who have had full foster to adopt training)
2	£ 125	Foster carer
3	£ 175	Foster carer
4	£ 360	Specialist foster carers ( <i>*Empower and Protect/** Foster Plus</i> )
	Hourly rate	Families Together ( <i>short break care for disabled children</i> )
	£ 100	Placement Premium

#### **3.1 Fostering skills level one:** This is for foster carers who have completed the 'Skills to Foster' programme and who have been approved as foster carers.

Within their induction year, newly approved foster carers are expected to attend the induction support group to further develop their fostering learning and development and complete 4 of the 7 modules of learning identified below, the aim of which is to enable foster carers to complete the 'Department for Education Training, Support and Development Standards Foster Carers 2012,' (TSDS)

- Attachment training
- First Aid
- Education for looked after children
- Child abuse and safe care

- Equality and diversity
- Record keeping
- Understanding behaviour

***For full expectations of the learning and development requirements of skills level 1, please see the ‘Foster Carer Job Description’ attached to the back of this protocol.***

**3.2 Fostering skills level two:** Foster carers **must have completed** and be on track to pass the TSDS, the minimum benchmark for what foster carers are expected to aspire to know and undertake within the first 12 to 18 months of being approved. This must be evidenced and recommended within the foster carer review.

Foster carers must have completed **all** of the training requirements set out above.

In addition foster carers must show a commitment to the development of themselves by attending and contributing to support groups.

***For full expectations of the learning and development expected of skills level 2, please see the ‘Foster Carer Job Description’ attached to the back of this protocol.***

**3.3 Fostering skills level three:** Foster carers have the TSDS qualification, have a minimum of two years of fostering and placement experience completed **all** of the core training requirement, and additional training, which may include:

- The role of the foster carer
- Cultural awareness
- Welcoming the child into placement
- Attachment training
- NVQ3

In addition foster carers must show a commitment to the development of the service, by being able to evidence as set out in the examples below:

- Attending and contributing to support groups
- Supporting recruitment activities
- Attend and contribute to consultation events
- Encourage children to participate in involvement activities
- Offer support to other carers

The foster carer must also be able to evidence how they have used their training within their fostering experience by completing a foster carer skills progression report. The progression must be agreed by the supervising social worker, and recommended with the foster carer review.

***For full expectations of the learning and development expected of skills level 3, please see the 'Foster Carer Job Description' attached to the back of this protocol.***

Progression must be agreed by the supervising social worker, in consultation with the foster carer, and agreed within the foster carer review process.

**3.4 Placement Premium:** This premium is in recognition of a foster carers skills and abilities in enabling a child or young person to build family connections and a sense of belonging by encouraging them to care for children and young people, who may currently be in 'out of authority' placements, or residential care.

**This could include:**

- Children with significant or life limiting disabilities should this be children with a formal assessment of being severely disabled
  - Sick children requiring invasive treatment as part of their daily care
  - Parent & baby placements
  - Larger sibling groups of 3 + children
  - Children entering the care system aged 14+
  - Children with mental health diagnosis
  - Children with significant substance misuse issues
  - Children assessed as high risk of Child Sexual Exploitation
  - Children stepping down from residential care
- 
- Emergency duty carers available to take any 0-18 year old child who requires care out of office hours

***The criteria for Placement Premium would be agreed prior to the placement beginning, and should be detailed in the placement referral report, and formally agreed by the Fostering ADM.***

**In addition, foster carers would be required to:**

- Evidence that they have physically and emotionally supported the child/ren to make positive progress, (measured within the child's care plan, child's review and fostering review)
- Demonstrated a commitment to agreed training, and applied this training to support complex needs, e.g. around attachment.
- Demonstrate a commitment to fostering ongoing learning and development by undertaking training within their skills level

In the above circumstances, the foster carer will receive the placement premium whilst caring for a child/children within this category, but will revert to level 1 – 3 (dependant on their skills progression) should the child move on.

Foster Carers who are in receipt of the premium payment would still be expected to progress through the bands as described above, continue to attend support groups, and commit to their ongoing learning and development through training.

**\*\*Empower and Protect Project:** Specially trained foster carers working to a specific clinical programme. Providing family based care for challenging young people aged 13 -17 including those at risk of or suffering from child sexual exploitation in any of the four South Yorkshire local authorities, Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster. These carers are exempt from placement premium. They are exempt from placement premium criteria.

**\*\*Foster Plus:** Carers who were approved on the former scheme and continue to meet the requirements of that scheme. They are exempt from placement premium criteria. The Foster Plus Emergency Carer's are in receipt of a retainer payment regardless of whether there is a child in placement.

*Payments are only made for the period when a child is placed with a foster carer. In exceptional circumstances payments may be made to a foster carer when a child is not placed with them with the agreement of the Head of Service.*

### **Short Breaks are For Disabled Children Scheme**

This is a separate scheme to mainstream fostering and is specifically for children who are not in the looked after system as such, carers are paid at a different rate. This is the support service offered to children with disabilities. Day care payments will be paid at an hourly rate of £7.20 per hour (8am - 8pm).

Carers are also paid a sleeping rate per night of £30. Should the child require medical intervention as part of their care needs from the carer during the night a fee of £7.20 per hour will be made.

## **Other Permanency Pathways**

This includes:-

- i) Regulation 24 Connected Carers will receive the child's allowance from the day of placement. They are expected to undertake checks and assessments and some basic training prior to being approved as Regulation 38 foster carers. Once they have successfully completed the full 'Skills to Foster' programme they will move to fostering skills level 1.
- ii) Foster to Adopt carers (prospective adopters who are approved to foster children prior to the child being freed for adoption). Skills payments will not be made.
- iii) Child Arrangement Orders. This piece of private law enables children to receive care from people whom the court deem appropriate rather than become 'looked after'. Where this is the case the holder of the Child Arrangement Order will receive an allowance from the date of the order, providing the child is placed at that point. Skills payment will not be made.

## **Adopters (excluding foster to adopt and former foster carers)**

It is expected that the majority of adopters are willing and able to financially care for the child/children whom they adopt and no allowance will be made.

## **Exceptional Financial Allowance for Adopters**

It is recognised that in exceptional circumstances such as when adopting a sibling group of 3 or more children, severely disabled children or children with significant medical issues or life limiting condition that ongoing financial support is required. Where the adoption team consider this appropriate, this will be discussed when the child is considered by the prospective adopters prior to matching. The availability of the allowance will be specified in the Post Adoption Support Plan.

These ongoing allowances are subject to a financial assessment if the prospective adopters household income is above £50,000 p a, and is reviewed annually see appendix. They are payable until the child reaches the age of 18 so long as the child continues to live with the adopter. However the Local Authority can choose to waive the financial assessment and where this is agreed it will be specified on the Post Adoption Support Plan.

## **Discretionary Setting up Payments for Adopters**

A discretionary setting up payment of up to £500 per child.

Exceptional one off payments can be made in specific circumstances such as the need for adaptations to care for a disabled child. The reason for these payments together with evidence that the proposal makes the best use of public funding must be presented in writing to the Adoption Decision Maker for consideration.

### **Special Guardianship Orders (non-foster carers) and Child Arrangement Orders**

The Local Authority recognises the importance of the Special Guardians role in supporting children in a permanent family.

**All eligible Special Guardians are paid an age based child allowance in respect of each child for whom they care minus child benefit**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Weekly Basic Rate</b>
	£
0 - 4 years	121.85
5 -10 Years	137.98
11 - 15 years	168.08
16 +	206.25

### **Foster Carers who offer children a permanent family via an Adoption or Special Guardianship Order**

The Local Authority recognises that in many circumstances it is right for children to achieve permanency with their foster carer through an SGO or adoption order.

Foster carers will continue to receive the child age based allowance including birthday and Festival and holiday allowance. The foster carer will continue to receive the same fostering fee they were receiving at the date the Adoption or Special Guardianship Order was made until the child reaches 18 years providing that the child is still living with them. This fee will not change,

NB Children under SGOs who go on to higher education or children who have a disability are also entitled to continuing support beyond the age of 18 years.

**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 Rotherham Fostering Service.**

**Anne-Marie Banks 03.08.16**

## **FOSTER CARER JOB DESCRIPTION**

Rotherham Borough Council is very proud of its Fostering Service and values each individual foster carer. We know that foster carers can make a considerable difference to a child or young person's life. Rotherham Borough Council operates a "Payments for Skills Scheme" which means that foster carers are paid in recognition of their skills and training undertaken.

The information below lists the minimum expectations we have for all our approved foster carers and indicates how these expectations can be evidenced. These expectations are derived from the National Minimum Standards (2011) that are underpinned by the Fostering Service Regulations (2011).

Under the "Skills Level Scheme" foster carers need to evidence the expectations listed below as well as the additional requirements indicated for each fee level.

### **Job Description: All Foster Carers**

#### **Expectations**

- 1. To provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment to meet the needs of individual children which take into account their background and experience.**

#### **Evidence**

- To provide an enduring environment which any placed child experiences as being safe and secure.
- To meet the identified needs of children in accordance with their care plan; to understand their background and the impact this has had on them, their development and their behaviour.
- To make written records in the form of daily logs.
- Understand and follow the principles of safer care.
- Have necessary equipment, including toys and opportunity for leisure activities for all children placed.
- To have adequate accommodation for children assessed as suitable by the Fostering Service.
- To complete the Training and Development Standards workbook within 12 months of approval.

**2. To work in partnership with other professionals to deliver the agreed care plan in respect of the placed child.**

**Evidence**

- To attend meetings relating to the child, to understand the care plan and to work with other professionals.

**3. To promote the health and safety of children within the home.**

**Evidence:**

- To ensure the home is maintained to a good standard and to complete the health and safety checklist annually alongside the supervising social worker.
- To ensure children receive appropriate medical attention, emergency, specific or routine.
- To make appropriate records of accidents and medication given.
- To undertake First Aid training within the first year of approval and a refresher course undertaken every three years.
- To undertake safeguarding training within the first year of approval and a refresher course undertaken every three years.
- To have a child specific safer caring policy in place for each child looked after which is updated and reviewed regularly, at least once every 12 months.
- To be a non-smoker if a child to be placed is under 5 years old.

**4. To help children cope with separation and loss and come to terms with past life experience.**

**Evidence:**

- To demonstrate in assessment that they have knowledge of the reasons children are looked after and to access training to assist them to help children cope.
- To undertake attachment training within the first year of approval.
- To assist in life work undertaken with the child.

**5. To provide children with consistent boundaries and to manage behaviour appropriately.**

**Evidence:**

- To demonstrate an understanding of why children may behave in certain ways.
- To be able to work on strategies alongside other professionals to moderate and change that behaviour where this is an agreed plan.
- To have attended Skills to Foster training.

**6. To help children maintain a positive view of their family as appropriate and in accordance with the care plan. To support and facilitate contact as agreed at the placement planning meeting.**

**Evidence:**

- To demonstrate understanding of why some parents are unable to look after their children and to be non-judgemental in attitude towards them.
- To support children to have meaningful contact with parents and other family members.
- To help children keep alive their connection with their families.

**7. To support and facilitate children in education by ensuring attendance at school and improving educational outcomes for them.**

**Evidence:**

- Transport children to and from school where identified in the placement planning meeting, or to support other arrangements as identified.
- Access a range of resources to support learning and access learning opportunities beyond the school day.
- Attend meetings at school where required.
- Liaise and co-operate with the Virtual School Service.
- Attend the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting for each child in placement.
- Support the targets identified at the PEP.

**8. To help and encourage children/young people grow in confidence and self-esteem and to develop a positive identity.**

**Evidence:**

- Engage the child in activities outside of the home which develop their skills, abilities and interests.
- See the child as a child first, as looked after secondly.
- Evidence understanding of providing a secure base for a child.
- Ensure the child is encouraged and supported to make choices.

**9. To keep the child's social worker informed of any significant events or issues.**

**Evidence**

- Follow procedures and guidance in accordance with requirements regarding information to be given to the child's social worker.
- Make required notifications as detailed in the handbook.
- Maintain written records of a good standard as required and to make these available to relevant professionals.

**10. To follow guidance from the supervising social worker and to work in partnership with all professionals involved.**

**Evidence:**

- Meet regularly with the supervising social worker and share their knowledge of the child looked after, to seek advice where necessary and to put this into practice.
- Understand delegated authority and be clear about what they can authorise and what they need permission for.
- Be available and prepared for supervision, which will happen at least four times a year or as required.

**11. To contribute to reviews for children in placement.**

**Evidence:**

- To complete paperwork in the timescales given, in a professional and coherent manner.
- To attend reviews for the children in placement and support children as necessary.
- Involve older birth children if living at home

**12. To attend training as identified by the Fostering Team and to be proactive in identifying own training and development needs.**

**Evidence:**

- Attend training as recommended by the supervising social worker, either during supervisory visits or at annual review
- Recognise their own developmental needs and discuss these with the supervising social worker
- Participate in their Personal Development Plan

**13. To actively participate in and attend foster carer reviews.**

**Evidence:**

- To contribute both written and verbal material regarding their own reviews.
- Complete paperwork provided by supervising social worker prior to review and return as requested.

**14. To work with other foster carers, the fostering team and promote the aims and objectives of the department in relation to development**

**Evidence**

- Be willing to participate in recruitment events and training events if requested
- Give positive messages to those interested in fostering and encourage potential applicants to contact the recruitment team

- To act in a professional manner at all times as a representative of Rotherham's fostering workforce.

### **Job Description: Foster Carer Level 1**

1. To be aged over 21 years
2. To have a ratified DBS
3. To be healthy enough to care for looked after children
4. To be able to demonstrate the ability to work as part of a team
5. To have met, and evidenced, all expectations as outlined above
6. To have some experience of caring for a child/young person
7. To have identified support networks available to assist you in the fostering task
8. To support and facilitate contact with the child's family, as appropriate to the child's care plan
9. To have basic IT and computer skills
10. To attend foster carer support groups
11. To put agreed strategies into place to manage behaviour
12. To have completed the Skills to Foster pre-approval training and the pre-approval assessment portfolio as evidence of your skills and knowledge, and this is to include
  - Equality and Diversity
  - Safe Care (part one)
  - Record Keeping

### **Essential**

1. To live within Rotherham or be able to travel to Rotherham
2. To have sufficient space in the home to accommodate a child/young person

### **Job Description: Foster Carer Level 2**

#### **Additional requirements to above expectations for all foster carers**

1. All requirements as listed in Level 1, with the following additional:
2. It is a requirement of the national minimum standards to complete the TSD workbook, experience should be evidenced through this method, it should not be given as an alternative.

3. To have completed your TSDS Standards workbook **and** complete all mandatory training as identified by the Fostering service and listed below:
  - a) Safer Care (Intermediate) Training for Foster Carer
  - b) Attachment Theory and Child Development
  - c) Introduction to Paediatric First Aid
  - d) LAC Education
  - e) Child Sexual Exploitation Training
4. To be able to identify your own further learning needs with encouragement from your SSW, and to be able to take responsibility to ensuring that you have completed your foster carer training
5. To help develop strategies to manage behaviour
6. To be able to evidence that your carer logs are up to date

**7. Essential**

1. As per Level 1

**Job Description: Foster Carer Level 3**

**Additional requirements to above expectations for all foster carers**

1. All requirements as listed in levels 1 & 2, with the following additional:
2. Therapeutic parenting
3. Dealing with challenging behaviour / SHADES training
4. To be able to evidence the ability to care for a child or young person with particularly risky and/or challenging behaviour
5. In a joint fostering household where both carers work outside the home, for one carer to ensure they only work hours that will not have an impact on the needs of the child/children looked after, this is likely to be no more than 20 hrs per week. In the case of a single carer the same consideration will need to be given to the impact of other paid employment on the carers' capacity to prioritise the fostering task.
6. To have support networks that are able to offer practical help, e.g. overnight care, collect from school in emergency etc.
7. To act as a mentor to other foster carers

8. To be actively involved in the recruitment of new foster carers, or to be able to evidence other ways that you contribute to the fostering service

### **Essential**

1. As per Level 1

### **Placement Premium**

This is a new incentive for foster carer's for having a positive impact on children's lives and outcomes. This premium is in recognition of a foster carers skills and abilities in enabling a child or young person to build family connections and a sense of belonging for children and young people, who may have otherwise been placed in out of authority placements, or residential care.

#### **This could include:**

- Children with significant or life limiting disabilities should this be children with a formal assessment of being severely disabled
- Sick children requiring invasive treatment as part of their daily care
- Parent & baby placements
- Larger sibling groups of 3 + children
- Children entering the care system aged 14+
- Children with mental health diagnosis
- Children with significant substance misuse issues
- Children assessed as high risk of Child Sexual Exploitation
- Children stepping down from residential care
- Emergency duty carers available to take any 0-18 year old child who requires care out of office hours

The criteria for Placement Premium would be agreed prior to the placement beginning, made and detailed in the placement referral report, and formally agreed by the Fostering ADM.

#### **In addition, foster carers would be required to:**

- Evidence that they have physically and emotionally supported the child/ren to make positive progress, (measured within the child's care plan, child's review and fostering review)

- Demonstrated a commitment to agreed training, and applied this training to support complex needs, e.g. around attachment.
- Demonstrate a commitment to fostering ongoing learning and development by undertaking training within their skills level

**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE**

**Foster Carer Agreement**

**The Fostering Services Regulations, 2002 - Regulation 28(5)(b)**

This Foster Carer Agreement is made on .....

Between

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council  
Riverside House  
Main Street  
Rotherham  
S60 1AE

And

**Terms of Approval**

## Part 1

### Obligations of the Local Authority

#### 1. Training

The Social Services Programme Area is committed to providing ongoing training to Foster Carers. As an approved Foster Carer you will have already been involved in a three day training and preparation programme. Further training courses are regularly available on Child Protection, Child Development and Behaviour Management, details of which are circulated to all Foster Carers at intervals throughout the year. Foster carers are encouraged to participate in training programmes in order that children looked after in foster homes can receive the best possible care. Foster carers with more than two years' experience in fostering may be able to register for the N.V.Q. Level 3 award in Caring for Children and Young People.

#### 2. Support

The Department's support to Foster Carers is provided in the following ways:-

- (a) By your designated Fostering Social Worker who will ensure that visits are made to see you in your home on a six weekly basis and when reasonably requested by the Foster Carer to do so. Every second visit the worker will visit at a time when the child is present. Regular ongoing contact will also be maintained by telephone.
- (b) By the child's Locality Social Worker, who will visit both the child and the Foster Carers within a week of placement, and then at a minimum of every 6 weeks up to a year, then every three months and also when reasonably requested to do so either by the Foster Carer or the child. The locality Social Worker will need to see the child alone during the visit and see their bedroom. Ongoing contact can also be maintained by telephone.
- (c) By the provision of support groups - your Fostering Social Worker will provide you with details of the support group of which you are a member. Such groups normally meet monthly and it is expected that Foster Carers will make every effort to attend these meetings. Any babysitting expenses incurred by the Foster Carers in attending these groups will be reimbursed by the Department.
- (d) The provision of a duty service from 8.30-5.30 pm, where Foster Carers can receive information and support in the absence of their designated Support Worker.
- (e) Foster Carers may drop in at the Fostering and Adoption Recruitment Centre during opening hours, to access written information and books and, also, to discuss any general issues with the Social Worker on duty.

- (f) Foster Carer Support Plan – at regular periods during long term/ permanent placements or at commencement of a placement the Fostering Social Worker should discuss with the Foster Carer what particular support they require. This should be recorded as an individual Foster Carer's Support Plan.

In situations where placements are being made where children have experienced multiple placement moves a Placement Support Package meeting should be held and a package of support should be developed and recorded.

### **3. Approval and Changes to Terms of Approval**

Following the assessment of a potential Foster Carer, or Review request to change the category of approval, the Fostering Social Worker's report is presented to Fostering Panel. The Panel makes a recommendation, which is then presented to the Agency Decision Maker, who then makes the decision.

If a Foster Carer is unhappy with the decision, they have 28 days to make a representation and this would be presented to the next available Panel. Again, a recommendation would be made and the Agency Decision Maker would make the decision. Foster carers are able to attend Panel and to take a supporter with them.

The Fostering Team will notify Foster Carers of changes in Terms/categories of Approval in writing.

### **4. Reviews**

All Foster Carers are reviewed at a minimum of once a year. The purpose of this review is to determine whether the Foster Carer remains suitable to act as a Foster Carer and to address any areas of concern. The review will also amend, if necessary, the terms and conditions of the approval (i.e. the number of children who can be placed and their age ranges). The written views of the Foster Carer are taken into account before this review takes place. Written contributions will be sought from children placed with carers, children previously placed and the carers birth children. Also, written comments will be sought from the children's locality Social Workers. When the outcome of the review has been determined, a letter will be sent to the Foster Carer explaining the outcome of this process.

## **6. Case Planning Meeting**

If a child is placed in an emergency, the Locality Social Worker should arrange a care planning meeting within 72 hours, where the plan for the child is discussed. This is an opportunity for the Foster Carer to gain more information about the child and ensure that all the documentation is available. Where possible the Fostering Social Worker should attend the Case Planning Meeting.

## **7. Placements**

The Department, in placing any child with a Foster Carer, will participate in a Foster Placement Agreement which sets out the purpose of the placement and other particular matters in relation to the care of the child in the foster home. This document must be signed by the Foster Carer and by the Locality Social Worker before any placement may proceed. The Department will also provide, at the beginning of any placement, written information about the child to be placed. In situations where a child is placed at short notice, this written information will be provided within 14 days of the beginning of the placement. The Locality Social Worker should provide initial information.

## **8. Short Breaks**

If carers wish to have a short break or holiday without their foster child, they must plan ahead and give at least 6 weeks' notice. Unless part of an individual Foster Carers support plan, carers may have a **total** of no more than two weeks short breaks or holiday within the year.

Weekend breaks from Friday to Sunday will not affect the Foster Placement Allowance but breaks of four or more days will mean a reduction in the Foster Placement Allowance.

Number and frequency of the breaks are to be included in the Foster Carer's support plan and discussed with the child's Social Worker.

## **9. Indemnity**

Foster carers are required to inform their household and property insurance company that they are approved Foster Carers. In the event of loss or damage to the Foster Carer's home or property caused by a foster child, for which the Foster Carer's insurance company is unable to indemnify, the Department's own insurers may cover such loss and damage.

## 10. **Foster Carer's Manual**

All approved Foster Carers are provided with a copy of the Foster Carers Manual. This document explains in detail the procedures referred to in this agreement together with explanations of other issues concerned with the provision of foster care. Foster carers should discuss with their support Social Worker any matter arising from the manual about which they are unsure.

## 11. **Complaints and Representations**

Should a Foster Carer be dissatisfied with any aspect of the service provided by the Department, they should feel free to make their views known. If the complaint is connected with a foster child in your care, the child's locality Social Worker should be contacted. In the event of the complaint being about matters with regard to foster care, the Foster Carer should contact their Fostering Social Worker. Should the issue not be resolved by these means, both workers have a Team Manager who would consider issues of disagreement and complaint, in the first instance. The Foster Carer may choose to use the Council's complaints procedure. The details of this procedure are contained in the Foster Carer's Manual.

## **General Conditions:**

### **Other Agencies**

- The Foster Carer shall not enter into any agreement with another agency while this Agreement remains in force.

### **Termination of the Foster Care Agreement**

- This agreement can be ended by either/both parties on giving notice in writing. If RMBC wish to terminate the agreement then a decision by the Agency Decision Maker is required, prior to the notification.
- Ending this agreement will not affect liability for any payments due to either party before or following the termination date. However, no further regular payments will be made following the termination notification.

### **Termination of Placements**

- Foster Carers should give 28 days' notice with reasons, in writing, should they wish to terminate a placement outside of the terms of the Placement Agreement.
- Where it appears to RMBC that the continuation of a placement would be detrimental to the welfare of the child concerned, RMBC may remove the child forthwith.

- Where a Foster Carer or RMBC feel that a placement has completely broken down and the child's needs are not being met or where there is potential significant harm to the child, the carer, or member of the carer's household, the placement can be terminated with the agreement of both parties.
- In case of Long Term sickness, where a Foster Carer or a member of their family is ill, they can after 14 days sickness apply to the Manager Fostering Team for termination of the placement.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Status: .....

Worksite Address: Fostering Team, Riverside House, Main Street, Rotherham  
S60 1AE

Telephone No: Rotherham 01709 254917 or 823975

**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

**Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting**

**Fostering Service**

**Foster Carer Learning & Development Agreement**

I, ..... (Foster Carer) and .....  
(Foster Carer) agree:

- To participate in mandatory learning & development (including refresher courses) and learning activities as determined in the Learning & Development Policy for Foster Carers
- To complete a minimum of 3 development activities during each review period
- To be responsible for meeting the training requirements and understanding that failure to maintain appropriate skills will result in a reduction skills level payment
- To develop and review my Personal Development Plan together with my Fostering Supervising Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)
- To maintain a continual Personal Development Portfolio and Reflective Learning Log.

I, (Fostering Supervising Social Worker) agree:

- To assess the Foster carer's learning needs and develop their Personal Development Plan
- To record Learning & Development Activities on Foster Carer's files (including any non-attendance/non-participation)
- To ensure that Certificates of Attendance, Participation or completion are issued for all courses and workshops to provide evidence of learning; a copy to be provided to the Foster Carer and a copy for the Foster Carer's File Records
- To review the Personal Development together with the Foster Carer and IRO.

## RMBC Learning and Development Policy for Foster Carers

I, (Fostering Team Manager) agree:

- To work with the Fostering Supervising Social Workers to manage, monitor and facilitate learning & development of Foster Carers approved by RMBC in line with the National Minimum Standards
- To ensure that Foster Carer learning & Development maintains a high profile within the Fostering Service
- To ensure that the learning & development provided is reflective, responsible, proactive and reactive to Foster Carer and child needs.

### **Foster Carer**

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....

### **Foster Carer**

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....

### **Fostering Supervising Social Worker**

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....

### **Fostering Team Manager**

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....

## RMBC Learning and Development Policy for Foster Carers