

Department for Children, Adults and Health

**Fostering Service**

**Criteria for Foster Carer Banding**

**1,2 and 3**

**Author: Fostering Task Force**

**Date: May 2020**

**Review: May 2022**

**FOSTER CARER BANDING - FEES AND ALLOWANCES**

**Introduction and Overview of Scheme**

**This document should be read in conjunction with other policies:**

* the “Financial Support to Foster Carers” document which gives details of how much foster carers are paid for each band
* The “Training Framework Document” which explains the training requirements for each foster carer
* The “Personal Development Plan” which is the place for foster carers to record their learning and development

In South Gloucestershire, foster carers’ income is made up of two main elements an Age-Related Maintenance Allowance paid on a weekly basis for the child or young person, and a weekly Fee per child depending on the carer’s skill level.

Payments to foster carers can only be made where they have been formally recommended for approval via South Gloucestershire Council’s Fostering Panel and ratified by the Agency Decision Maker, or under Regulation 24 (Care Planning Regulations) where the approval is for Connected Carers.

Approval at the different fee payment levels will depend on:

* The foster carers’ assessed core skills
* Their experience of caring for and working with children and young people
* Training and personal development that has been undertaken

There are three bands each with increasing expectations of availability and skill. This document sets out the criteria required of a foster carer for each band.

It is expected that most foster carers will commence on Band 1.

Foster carers must be able to demonstrate that they have continued to meet all the requirements for their banding level through their Personal Development Plan and the evidence within their annual review.

Foster carers who wish to progress to a higher banding must demonstrate their suitability by evidencing how they have met the criteria and the impact this has had on their fostering practice. Moving to a higher banding will normally be considered once a foster carer has provided the necessary evidence that they have met the criteria. The supervising social worker will then complete the form to be found at appendix 1. Agreement to an increase will be decided by the team manager and any disagreement will be decided by the service manager for corporate parenting.

When a foster carer is not meeting the criteria of their current banding level, they will be given three months to make the changes needed. Where this does not happen, foster carers will revert to the appropriate banding.

Connected carers are able to move between bandings in the same way as mainstream carers. Short break carers have a different payment system.

**Banding Level 1**

**Carer Availability:**

* Where it is assessed that a child requires consistency of care before and after school, and during school holidays, it is expected that foster carers will meet those needs themselves or from within their support network
* Provide care, with appropriate support, for the child if the child is sick or excluded from school
* Able to provide suitable care during all school holidays and if necessary, through agreed support care arrangements
* Willing to accompany the child to education, medical, dental, opticians, and therapeutic appointments
* Available to attend meetings and conferences with support, including children’s reviews, PEP meetings and Court attendance if required
* Available for regular visits by social worker, supervising social worker and other professionals usually during normal working hours
* Be available for regular supervision and to attend fostering panel when required
* Have in place a robust support network to assist in an emergency situation

Placement criteria:

* Be willing and able to take placements of children matched with them in line with the child/ren’s Care Plan/ or preferred terms of approval
* Understand the implications of delegated authority

Family Time for children:

* Be available to support the child around Family Time as required

**Professional Development Requirements:**

* Children’s Workforce Training Standards and Development portfolio is underway or completed within the specified timescale
* Main foster carer completion of core skills as specified in the Training Framework Document
* Secondary foster carer completion of core skills as specified in the Training Framework Document
* Have completed the training identified for them in line with their personal development plan, keep their plan updated and share it with their supervising social worker at supervision visits
* All foster carers attend a minimum of one foster carer’s engagement event per year
* All foster carers attend a minimum of one Virtual School “Keeping in Touch” session per year if fostering school aged children
* Main foster carers attend a minimum of four support groups per year, secondary carers will be encouraged to attend as many as possible
* Foster carers have prepared a “Welcome To Home” leaflet about their home

Recording requirements:

* Evidence the completion of recordings as outlined within South Gloucestershire Council’s Foster Carer Handbook
* Submit reports as requested for Children’s Looked After Reviews, Child Protection

conferences and any other meeting relating to the child

* Contribute to life story work
* Provide evidence for the foster carers’ own annual review
* Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given including online

Other requirements:

* Any carer who does not fulfil the criteria of this level by the time of their annual  
  review will require an assessment of their suitability to continue  
  as a foster carer

**Exceptional Payments**

In exceptional circumstance there may be a discretionary time-limited payment where it is assessed that a child requires consistency of care before and after school, and/or during school holidays. This needs to be agreed by the team manager with a date for review. It is however, usually expected that foster carers will meet those needs themselves or from within their support network.

**Banding Level 2**

**Carer Availability:**

* Where it is assessed that a child requires consistency of care before and after school, and during school holidays, it is expected that foster carers will meet those needs themselves or from within their support network
* Provide care, with appropriate support, for the child if the child is sick or excluded from school
* Able to provide suitable care during all school holidays and if necessary, through agreed support care arrangements
* As far as possible accompany the child to education, medical, dental, opticians, and therapeutic appointments
* Available to attend meetings and conferences with support, including children’s reviews, PEP meetings and Court attendance if required
* Available for regular visits by social worker, supervising social worker and other professionals during normal working hours
* Be available for regular supervision and to attend fostering panel when required.
* Have in place a robust support network to assist in an emergency situation

Placement criteria:

* Be willing and able to take placements of children matched with them in line with the child/ren’s Care Plan/ or preferred terms of approval
* Be willing and able to take placements from the EDT when appropriate
* Be confident in the execution of delegated authority
* Be willing, with support and training, to care for children and young people who, due to their circumstances, could potentially present behaviours which the carers have been assessed to be able to manage

Family Time for children:

* Be available to support the child before and after Family Time
* Be confident in promoting Family Time with siblings in conjunction with the child’sCare Plan
* Willing to support transport arrangements for Family Time

**Professional Development Requirements:**

* Children’s Workforce Training Standards and Development portfolio has been completed
* Main foster carer 8 core skills training is completed and updated according to the Training Framework Document
* Secondary foster carers have completed and updated training according to the Training Framework Document
* Have completed the training identified for them in line with their personal development plan, keep their plan updated and share it with their supervising social worker at supervision visits
* All foster carers attend a minimum of one foster carer’s engagement event per year
* All foster carers attend a minimum of one Virtual School “Keeping in Touch” session per year if fostering school aged children
* Main foster carers attend a minimum of six support groups per year, secondary carers will be encouraged to attend as many as possible
* Willing to occasionally provide support to the Fostering Service, perhaps in training, support groups, marketing or recruitment
* Foster carers have prepared a “Welcome To Home” leaflet about their home

Recording requirements:

* Evidence the completion of recordings as outlined within South Gloucestershire Council’s Foster Carer Handbook
* Submit reports as requested for Children’s Looked After Reviews, Child Protection

conferences and any other meeting relating to the child

* Contribute to life story work
* Provide evidence for their annual review
* Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given including online

Other requirements:

* Any carer who does not fulfil the criteria of this level by the time of their annual  
  review will require an assessment of their suitability to continue  
  as a foster carer within this banding

**Banding Level 3**

**Carer Availability**

* Where it is assessed that a child requires consistency of care before and after school, and during school holidays, it is expected that foster carers will meet those needs themselves or from within their support network
* Provide care, with appropriate support, for the child if the child is sick or excluded from school
* Able to provide suitable care during all school holidays and if necessary, through agreed support care arrangements
* Unless they are unavailable, accompany the child to education, medical, dental, opticians, and therapeutic appointments
* Available to attend meetings and conferences with support, including children’s reviews, PEP meetings and Court attendance if required
* Available for regular visits by social worker, supervising social worker and other professionals during normal working hours
* Be available for regular supervision and to attend fostering panel when required
* Where possible to support transporting the child to and from school
* Be available before and after Family Time
* Willing and able to supervise Family Time when deemed appropriate to do so in conjunction with the child’s Care Plan
* Have in place a robust support network to assist in an emergency situation
* Be willing and able to manage children and young people and their circumstances which could potentially present a cluster of behaviours of which the carers have been assessed to be able to manage

Placement criteria:

* Be willing and able to take placements of children matched with them in line with the child/ren’s Care Plan/ or preferred terms of approval. If no foster children in placement be willing and available to take emergency placements through the Family Placement Duty Team
* Be willing and able to take placements from the EDT when appropriate
* Be confident in the execution of delegated authority
* Be willing, with support and training, to care for children and young people who, due to their circumstances, could potentially present behaviours which the carers have been assessed to be able to manage, including young people who go missing or are vulnerable to exploitation

Family Time for children:

* Be available to support the child around Family Time as required
* Be confident in promoting Family Time with siblings in conjunction with the child’sCare Plan.
* Willing and able to facilitate Family Time in carer’s own home (if appropriate for thechild) between parents/extended family friends and or siblings.
* Willing and able to support transport arrangements for Family Time

**Professional Development Requirements**

* Children’s Workforce Training Standards and Development portfolio has been completed
* Main foster carer 8 core skills training is completed and updated according to the Training Framework Document
* Secondary foster carers have completed and updated training according to the Training Framework Document
* Have completed the training identified for them in line with their personal development plan and keep their plan updated with reflections on the impact of their training on their fostering practice. The personal development plan to be shared with the supervising social worker at supervision visits
* All foster carers attend a minimum of two foster carer’s engagement event per year
* All foster carers attend a minimum of two Virtual School Keeping in Touch session per year if fostering school aged children
* Main foster carers attend a minimum of eight support groups per year secondary carers will be encouraged to attend as many as possible
* When required offer their services to the Fostering Service which may include being a Buddy, helping with recruitment events, training and support groups or supporting carers if they have a complaint or standard of care concern raised against them
* Foster carers have prepared a “Welcome To Home” leaflet about their home

Recording requirements:

* Evidence the completion of recordings as outlined within South Gloucestershire Council’s Foster Carer Handbook
* Submit reports as requested for Children’s Looked After Reviews, Child Protection

Conferences and any other meeting relating to the child

* Ensure an on-going high standard of life story work
* Evidence for the foster carers’ annual review
* Ensure the safe storage and confidentiality of all information given including online

Other requirements:

* Any carer who does not fulfil the criteria of this level by the time of their annual  
  review will require an assessment of their suitability to continue  
  as a foster carer within this banding



Department for Children, Adults and Health

**Appendix 1**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FOSTER CARERS TRANSFER TO NEW FEE BANDS | | |
| **NAME OF FOSTER CARERS:** | | |
| **ADDRESS:** | | |
| **DATE OF REGISTRATION:** | | |
| **REGISTRATION:** | | |
| Current Band: | | |
| Age range: | | |
| Number of children: | | |
| **CURRENT CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN THE HOME:** | | |
| **Name:**  **Age: S.W:** | | |
| **Name:**  **Age: S.W:** | | |
| **Name: Age: S.W:** | | |
| **Summary of fostering experiences with children and young people over the last two years.** | | |
| **Supervising social worker’s assessment of how carer(s) have met the criteria required for new banding, (please refer to Criteria for Foster Carer Banding document).** | | |
| **CORE SKILLS TRAINING: Date main carer Date secondary carer**  **attended or attended or**  **booked on: booked on:** | | |
| First Aid |  |  |
| Safeguarding/child protection |  |  |
| Safer Caring |  |  |
| Equality & diversity |  |  |
| Report writing |  |  |
| Attachment and wellbeing |  |  |
| Managing behaviour |  |  |
| Child exploitation |  |  |
| DATE INDUCTION STANDARDS COMPLETED AND SIGNED OFF: | | |
| TRAINING ATTENDED IN THE LAST YEAR: | Date main carer attended: | Date secondary carer attended: |
| **Do the carers update their Personal Development Plan and record all their learning?** | | |
| **Do the carers use the Signs of Safety model in their practice?** | | |
| RECOMMENDATION: | | |
| SIGNATURES | | DATE |
| **Social Worker:** | |  |
| **Team Manager:** | |  |
| Foster Carer: | |  |
| Foster Carer: | |  |