

Section 5 – Finances (Family & Friends)

5.1 Foster Carer Payments

Allowances

You will receive weekly allowances for the child/children in line with those introduced by the Welsh Government as National Minimum Fostering Allowances. The rate of allowance varies according to the age of the child and it can be used to cover the cost of caring and essential everyday items such as clothes, food, toiletries etc. There is no additional finance for school uniforms. These are expected budgeted from the child's allowance.

You will receive a weekly allowance for each child you care for.

There are three age groups of allowances:

0-4 years

5-15 years

16 + years

Initial Clothing Allowance

If a child is being placed for the first time into foster care and does not have adequate clothing you can request an initial one off clothing allowance payment. This is to purchase the basic clothing that the child will need.

The initial clothing allowance is not paid in situations such as a child moving from a short term placement to a long term placement or if a child is moving due to breakdown in placement.

Mileage Allowance

As a foster carer you are able to claim for additional mileage for any journeys that are over normal everyday travelling for the child and for journeys in relation to your role as a foster carer.

These are as follows:

- Meetings in relation to the care planning of the child/children e.g. LAC reviews, planning meetings, PEP meetings.
- Non routine hospital/doctors/dentist/optician appointments – providing the journey is further than 2 miles in one direction

- Transport to and from education for daily attendance, parents evenings – providing the journey is further than 2 miles in one direction
- Adoption planning meetings and introductions
- Attendance at or the facilitation of training
- Attendance at support groups
- Participation in working groups/being part of an interview panel/providing peer mentor support

Mileage claims must be submitted to your link worker on a monthly basis. For additional expenditure such as car parking tickets, bridge fees, receipts must be attached to your receipt for re-imburement.

If for some reason you do not submit your mileage form and you have a claim that is over three months old, this will need to be considered for approval by a Service Manager.

All mileage claims must be submitted within each financial year and by the deadline as stated on the front of the mileage form. If claims are received at the start of a new financial year that are dated from the previous financial year then these will not be authorised.

Payment of Allowances

Allowances are paid from the date that a child is placed with you, then every two weeks there after straight into your chosen bank account. A remittance slip is also issued to yourselves that is sent directly to you from our finance department, which gives details of the payments that are being made.

Overpayment or Underpayment of allowances

There can be rare instances whereby you may receive an overpayment. If this happens the finance department will contact you to arrange a method and agreement in order to retrieve the overpayment.

If there are any changes with children in your care the finance department should be contacted as soon as possible so the errors can be rectified promptly.

Discretionary Financial Assistance Fund

This fund is a one-off payment that can be applied for to assist with the finance of paying towards an activity /hobby for the child you are caring for. Please ask your fostering worker for more details should you feel this is required.

Junior Individual Savings Account (JISA)

The Government has introduced a Junior ISA Scheme that has been introduced for all looked after children, who have been continuously looked after for one year or longer and whom did not benefit from the Child Trust Fund. The Government will make an initial payment of £200.00, which will be managed by The Share Foundation – a registered charity. The money will belong to the child and will remain in the ISA until the child reaches 18 years of age when only the child will have permission to access the money. Further contributions to the ISA can be made at any time.

If the young person returns to their parents or family, or is adopted, then the Junior ISA will be transferred to the management of the parent, who then becomes the Recognised Contact with the Junior ISA Provider. However, the account can still only be accessed by the young person when they reach 18.

For further information relating to this scheme please visit <http://www.sharefound.org>

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)

The finance department will send you information in relation to income tax and what as foster carers your tax relief limit is. However it is your responsibility to register with HMRC on approval as a foster carer.

For further information or assistance in relation to this please visit <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/foster-carers.htm> or follow the HM Revenue and Customs link via the foster carers website.

Insurance

It is your responsibility to inform both your vehicle and home insurers that you are now foster carers. This is to ensure that you have adequate cover and protection should you suffer from any damage or loss to your property.

As well as having your own insurance, Caerphilly County Borough Council also operate an insurance scheme for extra protection – this is for home buildings and contents insurance only and does not include vehicles. Insurance claims are subject to a £50.00 excess and if the claim is considered reasonable then the authority will pay this excess for you. However it is important to note that if it becomes apparent that you do not have the adequate personal insurance cover, this will make the authority's policy invalid.

In the event of you having to make a claim, if your own insurer has refused, you can request a claim through the authority.

You will need to complete a claims form which will be forwarded to the authority's Finance Department and the Insurance and Risk Manager within the Resources Directorate for consideration.

Depending on the type of claim an assessor from the insurance company may need to visit you to inspect the damage. It is therefore important to ensure you keep the damaged items until they have been examined.

In some instances the insurer may decide to repair the damage. If this is the case you must be aware that if you choose to replace and fund the damage item yourself prior to them being examined there is no guarantee that you will receive reimbursement.

As the authority's insurance policy does not cover damage to vehicles, any damage occurred as a result from a child or young person, the authority will consider reimbursement for any loss of no claims bonus and any policy excess payable.