

# FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS AND ALLOWANCES

Fostering Service, April 2011 – March 2012



## CONTENTS

Contents.....	2
Payments and Allowances for Plymouth City Council Foster Carers.....	3
Maintenance allowance	3
Weekly reward payments	4
Respite foster carers	4
Parent and baby foster carers	4
Payment Bands	5
Children and payment Bands	6
Respite (support breaks)	6
Taxable treatment of fostering payments	6
Benefits and fostering payments	7
Birthday, festival and holiday allowances	7
Loyalty Bonus	8
Foster care equipment	8
Clothing allowances	8
School trips and clubs	9
Day care costs for children excluded from school	10
Children with disabilities or special needs	10
Transport costs	10
Additional payments	11
Disturbance allowance	11
Fostering carers doing additional tasks for the Fostering Service	12
Children in boarding school	13
Children in hospital, custody or secure accommodation	13
Sickness	13
Disputes	13
Ending of placements and overpayments	13
Ending payments when children reach age 18	14
Young People living independently/semi-independently or who have left care	14
Adjustments to allowances where the young person is under 18 years of age and earning but still placed with foster carers	14
Young people remaining with carers post 18	15
Foster carers' property – Insurance, damages, theft etc.	15
Payment arrangements	16
Delays in payments	16
Appendix 1 – Role profile and criteria for each payment Band.....	17
Band 1	17
Band 2	18
Band 3	20
Band 4	22
Appendix 2 – Clothing .....	27
Appendix 3 - Summary of fostering Allowances 2011-2012 .....	28

# PAYMENTS AND ALLOWANCES FOR PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL FOSTER CARERS

1.0 Plymouth City Council recognises:

- The skills, experience and commitment of foster carers caring for children and young people.
- The role foster carers play in working with families in partnership with the Department.

1.1 This document outlines the 'Payment for Skills' scheme of payments to all foster carers approved by Plymouth City Council. It does not include placements with independent sector agency foster carers as those are covered by separate contracts.

1.2 The maintenance allowance for Band 1 carers reflects the Fostering Network recommended rate. The maintenance allowance for Bands 2-4 exceeds the Fostering Network's recommendations. The overall scheme will be reviewed annually. The payment levels for each Band are detailed in Appendix 3. This booklet will be updated and reissued electronically to foster carers as required.

## Maintenance allowance

2.0 The maintenance allowances available to all foster carers are an equitable payment for meeting the needs of children in care. They exceed the national minimum allowances set by the Government. The maintenance allowance for Band 1 foster carers is equal to the recommendations of the Fostering Network. The maintenance allowance for Bands 2, 3 and 4 is higher than this. The different levels of maintenance allowance for new and experienced carers reflect the need to recognise the costs, skills and ability to care for a diversity of children.

2.1 If Plymouth City Council places a child with a foster carer registered with another local authority then we will pay the rate of that local authority.

2.2 The maintenance allowance will cover food, clothing, pocket money, personal and household expenditure, special outings, dental and optical needs, activities (school, clubs or hobbies) and associated equipment, transport and telephone expenses, and school meals (free school meals cannot be claimed).

2.3 An emergency payment of £150 as an advance of the maintenance allowance can be paid direct to the foster carer when an emergency placement is made. This payment is to provide for the immediate needs of the child and **does not** form part of the initial clothing grant. This payment will be deducted from the first maintenance allowance payment.

2.4 All pocket money should be paid from the maintenance allowance. The amounts suggested below are provided as a guide only to assist carers in determining a reasonable minimum level of pocket money. We would encourage carers to pay more than they usually would for special occasions, to reward achievements, positive or improved behaviour or for one-off events.

Age	Amount
5-7 years	£2.00
8-10 years	£3.00
11-13 years	£5.00
14+ years	£8.00

## **Weekly reward payments**

3.0 For foster carers on Bands 3 and 4, one reward payment will be payable per household regardless of the number of children placed.

3.1 Foster carers on Band 3 will only receive the weekly reward payment if children are placed.

3.2 Full-time Band 4 foster carers will receive the weekly reward payment of £411 whether or not a child is placed, with the following conditions:

- Between placements, Band 4 carers will continue to receive the weekly reward payment unless the break exceeds two weeks and was requested by the foster carer.
- Band 4 carers who are between placements and still receiving reward payments may be required to undertake additional tasks at the discretion of Plymouth City Council, but these will always be appropriate for the carer's role and status.
- If Plymouth City Council has not been able to match the carer with a suitable placement then the reward element will continue but will be reviewed after six weeks.
- If it is considered that future placements are unlikely because the carer is unable to provide the service required by Band 4 carers then they will be given four weeks' notice that their reward payments will cease.

## **Respite foster carers**

4.0 Respite foster carers will receive the maintenance allowance and any reward payment for their Band on pro rata, depending on when children are in placement. This will be paid to the respite carer on a 'full day' basis regardless of the time the child arrives or departs. If a foster carer offers respite to a child who normally lives with carers on a different payment Band then the respite carer will only receive payments at their own Band level.

4.1 If a respite foster carer is invited to attend meetings as part of a child's care plan when the child is not in placement, consideration may be given to paying them for their time at the rate paid to foster carers doing additional tasks for the fostering service (section 20). This includes meetings relating to the child such as children's reviews and adoption meetings. It does not include time spent on the carer's own training and development. Payments must be agreed beforehand by the Service Manager, Permanency and Placements.

### Child minding

4.2 For the purposes of this booklet, child minding is defined as daycare where the child does not stay with the respite foster carer overnight.

4.3 Foster carers providing child minding to another child for more than half a day will be paid at the weekly maintenance allowance divided by seven. This amount will be halved for sessions of half day or less.

## **Parent and baby foster carers**

5.0 Foster carers will receive the following weekly payments for parent and baby placements:

- Maintenance allowance for the baby
- Maintenance allowance for the parent, paid at 16+ rates regardless of the parent's age or financial situation. Child benefit will be deducted from this allowance. If there are two parents in the placement then the carer will receive a maintenance allowance for each parent

- Reward payment for the carer – £200 for assessment placements (maximum 12 weeks); or £100 for holding placements

5.1 If the foster carer is on Band 3 or Band 4 then the carer will receive either the parent and baby reward payment described in 5.0 above, or the weekly reward payment for their Band, whichever is **higher**.

5.2 The £200 reward payment will only be made while the placement is actively undergoing an assessment, which the carer is contributing to. If the placement continues once the assessment has ended then the payment will become a holding placement with a £100 reward payment.

### **Payment Bands**

6.0 The criteria and other details regarding each payment Band are described in Appendix 1.

6.1 Newly approved foster carers will have the option to progress from Band 1 to Band 2 after their first and second annual reviews. A recommendation must be made at the review, to be ratified by the Service Manager, Permanency and Placements.

6.2 Newly approved foster carers must work towards progressing to Band 2 or higher. They cannot remain on Band 1 for more than two years. The exception to this are family and friends foster carers approved to look after a specific child, who can choose to remain on Band 1 if they do not wish to meet the requirements (such as training) for the higher Bands.

6.3 If a family and friends carer is approved to look after other children then they can immediately move to Band 2 if they meet the criteria. The assessing social worker will check whether the carer meets the criteria for Band 2 and the decision to enable them to move to Band 2 process will be made by the Service Manager, Permanency and Placements.

6.4 A limited number of places are available on Bands 3 and 4 at any one time. Applications to these Bands can be made when places are available. Details of the process are available on request.

6.5 Applicants for Band 4 must be available to take new placements at the point of application, or have a short term placement that will end in the next three months.

6.6 If a foster carer disagrees with the outcome of an application to move to a higher Band then they may lodge an appeal as follows:

- The applicant should outline the reasons for the appeal in a letter to the Looked After Children Head of Service, Midland House, Plymouth City Council, Plymouth, PL1 2AA.
- Within 14 days of receipt of the letter, the Head of Service will contact the applicant to arrange an individual meeting to discuss the situation and review the relevant paperwork.
- A decision will be made within 28 days of receipt of the letter.

6.7 Foster carers moving to higher payment Bands will do so for a probationary period, to be ratified at the annual review (which will include a CAMHS assessment for Band 4 carers) and monitored at subsequent reviews. If a foster carer no longer meets the criteria for their Band then they may be required to move down to the appropriate Band.

6.8 If a foster carer is to be moved to a lower Band then a notice period of four weeks will be given. For Band 3 carers, this only applies if there are children in placement during the notice period because the reward payment is only payable while children are placed. If the foster carer has children in placement for some but not all of the notice period then the reward payment will be adjusted accordingly.

## **Children and payment Bands**

7.0 An overall principal underlying Payment for Skills will be that carers are paid according to their skills and experience, and that children are not 'Banded'. Although broadly speaking, Band 3 carers are expected to care for more complex children than Band 1 or 2 carers, each individual child is not defined as being a particular Band, and children are matched with carers on an individual basis depending on whether the carer can meet their needs - regardless of payment Band.

7.1 Band 4 is an exception because it involves children who need particularly specialised care that would not be possible in the majority of foster homes, and this must be acknowledged in order to match them with a suitable carer.

7.2 If a Band 1, 2 or 3 foster carer looks after a child who turns out to have very complex needs that would normally require a Band 4 carer then the placement will be eligible to receive additional support depending on the needs of the child and carer. The carer will not receive additional payments because they have not shown that they meet the criteria for Band 4 or undergone the application process.

## **Respite (support breaks)**

8.0 Placement stability is of vital importance to children's wellbeing. It is therefore good practise to ensure that respite/support breaks are only taken if they are necessary for the child's wellbeing or to stabilise a placement. Our policy regarding respite reflects this.

8.1 Foster carers on payment Bands 1-3 are entitled to 14 days respite per year, if this is needed. All Band 4 carers should be able to access up to 28 days of respite or equivalent per year, dependent on the child's needs.

8.2 A retainer of 50% of the weekly maintenance allowance will be paid to the full-time carer while the child is on respite. Any reward payment for their Band will continue in full. If the carer takes more respite than their entitlement then their retainer and any reward payment will cease unless the additional respite has previously been agreed as part of the child's plan or by agreement with the Service Manager due to extreme personal circumstances.

8.3 A carer's respite entitlement will accrue each month and can only be taken when enough days have been accrued. They can be used flexibly, e.g. as a number of weekends or as one or two longer breaks. Respite entitlement cannot be carried over from one financial year to the next.

8.4 Additional support breaks can be agreed depending on the child's needs but only as part of the child's Care Plan and with the agreement of the Service Manager.

8.5 Foster carers must negotiate when support breaks can be taken as part of the plan for the child. They must be prepared to time their breaks around the needs of the placement. Breaks should be taken between placements wherever possible.

8.6 Foster carers are strongly advised not to accept new placements if they have booked to go on holiday early on in the placement, to avoid unnecessary moves for the child. Foster carers should declare any holiday they have booked at the time a new placement is proposed to them. If a foster carer takes a new placement and has already booked a holiday longer than their support breaks entitlement then they will only be paid the retainer for the number of days they are entitled to. No allowances or reward payments will be made for the remainder of the holiday.

## **Taxable treatment of fostering payments**

9.0 Please visit <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/foster-carers.htm> for information about the taxable treatment of fostering payments. It is very important that all foster carers read this and understand its contents because individuals have a personal responsibility in law to notify the tax

office if they receive payments over and above the 'exemption amount' notified in the guidance note.

9.1 In summary, ALL payments that a carer receives are taken into account when determining whether they need to declare earnings to the tax office. The total payments received in a year (or pro rata) are compared to the exemptions allowed and any difference above this limit should be declared to the tax office and tax paid through 'self-assessment'.

9.2 To assist in this process, Plymouth City Council can provide foster carers with details of the total payments made to them in the previous tax year to help them determine whether or not they need to declare earnings to the tax office. Foster carers can request details of the total payments that have been made to them by calling 01752 308777 and asking for child payments.

9.3 If a foster carer feels that they will need to declare their foster care income, or has any other query regarding tax, then they should contact the local tax office on 01752 209662 or for correspondence: Inland Revenue, Cornwall and Plymouth Area Office, Pehaligon House, Trinity Street, St. Austell, Cornwall, PL25 5BG. Further information on these changes can be found at: [www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk](http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk). Plymouth City Council cannot get involved in a person's tax affairs.

### **Benefits and fostering payments**

10.0 Most fostering payments do not affect the benefits that carers are entitled to. The Fostering Network publishes a leaflet called 'Benefits: Information for foster carers'. This is available in the members' area of the [Fostering Network website](#). Foster carers are responsible for checking any declaring any fostering payments that may have an affect on their benefits.

### **Birthday, festival and holiday allowances**

#### Birthday and festival allowances

11.0 Birthday and festival allowances will be paid equivalent to one week's Band 2-4 Maintenance Allowance according to age-banded rates. **All** carers will receive Band 2-4 rates regardless of their payment Band:

- Birthday - Paid in the payment week before the week of the child's birthday.
- Festival - Paid at least two weeks before Christmas Day unless the carer or child elects to receive it at the time of another festival.

#### Holiday allowances

11.1 Where children accompany foster carers on holiday, carers can request a holiday allowance equivalent to up to two weeks Band 2-4 Maintenance Allowance, regardless of their payment Band. This will be paid only once during a financial year (April-March). A holiday must actually be arranged for carers to be able to claim for the allowance through the child's social worker. However, the holiday allowance will also be paid to carers taking holidays 'at home' if the foster carer provides evidence of leisure activities during that period. This will also cover any other holidays taken with that carer in the year. Foster carers must provide receipts of holiday bookings/leisure activities, or a written statement outlining the activities that will be undertaken.

11.2 Holiday allowances must be claimed in the year in which the holiday takes place. Unclaimed allowances cannot be 'rolled-forward' and are 'lost' if not claimed by 31 March.

11.3 Foster carers should avoid claiming the maximum holiday allowance if the child may not remain with them for the full year, as their next carer may need a holiday allowance too.

11.4 The cost of cancellation of the child's portion of the holiday cost will be reimbursed (less any refunds received/insurance claim) if the child is moved following a decision by Plymouth City Council before the holiday takes place.

11.5 In exceptional circumstances, if the cost of the holiday exceeds the maximum allowance payable or where a change in placement results in the child needing to accompany their new carers on another holiday, then the Permanency and Placements Service Manager may consider making a higher payment.

11.6 The task of obtaining a passport and paying for it is the responsibility of the childcare social worker. Adequate holiday insurance cover should be arranged and paid for by the foster carer as part of the holiday allowance.

### **Loyalty Bonus**

12.0 Provided that they have had children in placement during the year, all foster carers will receive an annual Loyalty Bonus of £100 per household. This is in recognition of their services to Plymouth City Council and local children and families.

12.1 The Loyalty Bonus will be paid in a lump sum each March and covers the financial year leading up to it. It will be paid on a pro rata basis for new carers approved part way through the year. If a carer is deregistered before the end of the year, the Bonus will be paid pro rata in March.

### **Foster care equipment**

13.0 Plymouth City Council will purchase and loan equipment to ensure that foster carers have the equipment that is required to safely look after the age of child they are approved for such as child car restraints (which must be professionally installed and checked every year for each car that they are used in, and when the foster carer changes their car), cupboard locks, stair gates, pond covers, fire guards, cooker guards, socket covers, high chairs, cots, beds and prams – please note that this list is not exhaustive. Mattresses for babies must be replaced after each medium to long-term placement, in agreement with the supervising social worker. Mattresses for older children will be replaced as needed. All equipment must have met Government standards and requirements.

#### Payments for computers and Internet access

13.1 No payments are available to provide computer equipment or Internet access for foster carers. Foster carers are expected to provide their own computer equipment and Internet connection that is available to the children in their care, subject to current e-safety guidance.

### **Clothing allowances**

14.0 The basic maintenance allowance includes an element for clothing. The Fostering Network guidelines should be used by social workers to assess what clothing is necessary (see [Appendix 2](#)).

14.1 An initial clothing allowance may be payable. This is dependent on the clothing possessed by the young person at the point of admission. This will not be paid when a child has moved from one carer to another or from a residential unit because the child should move with suitable clothing. The same applies if the child is moving from an independent sector provider either in foster care or residential (subject to individual contract with the provider).

14.2 Social workers should take all reasonable steps to ensure that clothing accompanies a young person to placement. An allowance can only be paid after this has been completed and shortfalls identified. In view of this, it will not always be necessary to spend the **full** allowance. Social workers will therefore need to assess the level of payment required in conjunction with the guidance in Appendix 2.

14.3 Total payment should not exceed the following rates:

Age of child	Clothing allowance
0 – 10 years	<b>Assessed amount</b> (not to exceed £120.00)
11 – 18 years	<b>Assessed amount</b> (not to exceed £179.00)

**Note: Social workers should assess the level of clothing required based on Appendix 2 and not just claim the maximum.**

14.4 Allowances for school uniform and work clothing are payable. (Please note that an additional grant for school uniform may be needed when a child comes into care.)

Stage	Maximum Allowance
Starting infant or junior school	£190.00
Changing infant or junior school	£120.00
Starting secondary school	£298.00
Changing secondary school	£190.00
Starting work, training course or college	£298.00

14.5 Due to the decreasing cost of basic school uniforms in recent years, it is anticipated that the maximum allowance will not be required in most cases. If the maximum is claimed then the carer will be asked to explain why it is required.

14.6 It is expected that the grant for starting work, training course or college will be used to purchase equipment associated with the work or course.

**14.7 Carers should obtain receipts for all clothing purchased and send them to Child Payments, Plymouth Fostercare, Plymouth City Council, Plymouth, PL1 2AA to support any payment that has been/will be made.**

14.8 If required then a cash advance can be paid to enable the foster carer to purchase clothing. Once the clothing has been purchased then the carer must provide receipts. Any difference between the amount provided and the amount spent will be deducted from or added to the maintenance allowance as appropriate. If receipts are not provided then the amount provided as a cash advance will automatically be deducted from the following week's maintenance allowance.

14.9 Carers for children with disabilities or special needs may need additional clothing allowances or one-off payments. These can be made with the agreement of the Permanency and Placements Service Manager.

### **School trips and clubs**

15.0 Only one recreational holiday (school/club) per child that is organised by the school – up to £500 - will be paid for the **entire duration** of their time in primary school and one whilst in senior school. This must be authorised beforehand by the Permanency and Placements Service Manager. It is expected that the usual maintenance allowance will cover pocket money and any additional clothing required.

15.1 For trips organised as part of the course of study (e.g. geography field trips), Plymouth City Council will reimburse any **excess** over £50 per trip.

15.2 Costs of after-school clubs or holiday clubs in school should be met from the maintenance allowance. (Cost of music or similar extra lessons – see section 19.)

## **Day care costs for children excluded from school**

16.0 This section only applies to foster carers on Bands 1, 2 and 3.

16.1 Where a child is excluded from school during term time for a period of 10 school days or more, and no alternative full time package has been arranged, an allowance of £10 per school day (not weekends) is payable. This will be for those days the child is not involved in home tuition (away from placement) or other form of support. Payment will start 10 school days after exclusion.

16.2 For permanent exclusions, payment will continue up to the end of the school term/half term. If the exclusion is to continue into the new term then the request must be renewed.

## **Children with disabilities or special needs**

17.0 The child's social worker should ensure that any relevant disability allowances are claimed. These benefits need to be taken into account when assessing exceptional expenditure. Childcare Team Managers should discuss these cases with the relevant Plymouth FosterCare Team Manager.

17.1 The foster carer will be responsible for the child's Disability Living Allowance (DLA), if applicable. Foster carers should take steps to ensure they can provide evidence of how this money has been used. The money should be put into a separate bank account. All expenditure must be agreed with the child's social worker beforehand. The foster carer should keep a record of what the money has been spent on and ensure that statements are available to be viewed by social workers.

## **Transport costs**

18.0 The weekly maintenance allowance includes all transport directly associated with being a foster carer, up to 90 miles per child per week. This includes all transport relating to fostering including contact, school journeys, health appointments, meetings relating to the placement, foster carer training and support groups. This is due to the fact that approximately 10% of the weekly maintenance allowance is paid to fund the travel element of the placement. The 90 miles is derived from 10% of the average maintenance allowance, taking into account the average fuel consumption of an average car at current fuel prices and includes a contribution towards maintenance costs. Due to the changing cost of fuel, this will be reviewed every two years, the next review being due on 1 April 2013.

18.2 Foster carers can not claim any additional mileage until they have exceeded the total mileage for all children in placement based on 90 miles per child. All journeys for all children will be calculated against this total. For example, if one child in a fostering household consisting of two children requires 160 miles of transport per week, but the other child only requires 10 miles, then no additional mileage can be claimed.

18.3 Carers wishing to claim reimbursement for additional mileage must complete a claim form and provide VAT receipts for their petrol. Only the additional mileage should be detailed on the claim form, but the carer will be asked to provide some explanation of why they needed to do so much mileage. Passenger mileage allowance is not payable. Reimbursement will be paid at Inland Revenue approved rates (currently 40p per mile for the first 10,000 miles, and 25p thereafter).

18.4 No reimbursement will be payable for journeys that would take place whether or not children were in placement, such as family outings and shopping trips. Reimbursement will only be made for school transport if there are no other alternatives for the child to get to school (for example if they are not old enough to use school transport).

18.5 Foster carers who do not provide their own transport will be expected to spend up to the equivalent of up to £19 per week per child on public transport from the weekly maintenance allowance (including taxis, where previously agreed). **Please note that this is instead of the**

**above mileage allowance, not in addition.** If more than one child is in placement then the £19 will be multiplied by the number of children in placement. The carer can claim reimbursement for anything that is spent over and above this amount. Receipts must be provided, and money spent on taxis must be agreed beforehand.

18.6 The weekly maintenance allowance includes 90 miles OR £19 towards public transport per child. This will be combined where the carer provides both mileage and public transport and needs to claim any excess. This will be calculated on the principle that the first 90 miles are equal in value to the public transport allowance of £19, which means that the first 90 miles are paid at 15.8p per mile. Miles driven will therefore be calculated at a rate of 15.8p per mile for the first 90 miles, then 40p for any miles over and above this. This will show the total cost that the carer has spent on transport. The £19 that is included in the maintenance allowance will be deducted from this amount, and the carer can claim any excess.

18.7 In exceptional circumstances, if the carer is unable to provide transport for a valid reason then the childcare team will make and pay for arrangements using the Transport Department (tel. 01752 307887). Please note that teams should not request a deduction from foster carer payments in lieu of other arrangements, except where the social worker judges that the reason for refusal is invalid or unreasonable. This decision must be endorsed by the Permanency and Placements Service Manager.

18.8 All claims must be made within three months of the journey taking place (forms should be submitted each fortnight in order for payment to be included in the next payment run). No forms submitted after this date can be accepted.

### **Additional payments**

19.0 The Payment for Skills scheme has been designed to cover all payments to foster carers. It is therefore not anticipated that any additional payments for foster carers will be required.

### Disturbance allowance

19.1 Placements made by the Out of Hours Service will be supported by a payment of £25 for disturbance, which is a reward payment in recognition of the time and inconvenience incurred. This **will not** be deducted from the maintenance allowance.

### Retainers

19.2 A retainer of 50% of the weekly maintenance allowance can only be paid to carers on Bands 1-3 for a period of up to two weeks prior to the planned start date of a placement if the carer is attending meetings, introductions or doing other pre-placement preparatory work, or up to four weeks after a placement has ended (to be agreed by the Permanency and Placements Service Manager).

19.3 Retainers cannot be paid simply to reserve placements for children in advance.

### Telephone allowance

19.4 Telephone expenses are included in the maintenance allowance.

19.5 Exceptional payments will be considered, for example for long-distance and overseas calls which are necessary to promote contact between the child or young person and their family. These arrangements should be agreed when forming or reviewing the care plan. Itemised bills will be required for reimbursement of actual expenditure.

## Health and cultural needs

19.6 Any additional costs associated with special dietary, skin or hair needs for health or cultural reasons will be negotiated as part of the placement agreement.

## Cost of coaching etc. for exceptional sporting, drama, dance or music skill

19.7 It is expected that foster carers should meet costs of up to £10 per week of any lessons/sessions from their maintenance allowance. Any costs over and above this should be negotiated as part of the care plan and agreed between the childcare and Plymouth Fostercare Service Manager.

## Personal Education Allowances

19.8 Personal Education Allowances (PEA's) are grants up to £500 that can be made available for any child in care who is unlikely to meet their educational potential. They may be agreed where it can be shown that a child will benefit from extra support that is not available from the school, for example extra tuition, a hobby to raise their self-esteem, special computer package or educational activities such as theatre trips. PEA's can only be accessed as a result of a recommendation from a Personal Education Plan meeting. Any foster carer with a child who might be eligible should discuss this with the child's social worker.

## Proms

19.9 Plymouth City Council will pay for each young person to attend one prom to celebrate finishing statutory education. A maximum of £150 will be paid to cover the cost of dresses, suit hire etc. This must be authorised beforehand by the Permanency and Placements Service Manager. Receipts must be provided.

## Support workers

19.10 Where a support worker takes a child out, it is the foster carer's responsibility to pay for any meals or activities that are purchased for the child.

## **Fostering carers doing additional tasks for the Fostering Service**

20.0 Band 3 and 4 carers must be willing undertake additional tasks for the fostering service (where appropriate given the needs of the carer's current placements), such as recruiting new carers, running or co-facilitating in training of other foster carers and prospective foster carers, supporting other foster carers, support work to the children of other carers (including supervision of contact), support groups and other activities associated with the fostering task, up to five hours per week.

20.1 The above tasks will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, agreed with the supervising social worker and will depend on the foster carer's skills.

20.2 Band 4 carers will be expected to carry out these tasks within the weekly reward payment.

20.3 Where a Band 3 carer undertakes these tasks, they will be reimbursed at £10.70 per hour. These tasks are not considered to be fostering. Such payments are therefore taxable and must be made via a CTS23 timesheet and paid through Plymouth City Council's payroll system.

20.4 Where a carer does additional tasks then actual child-minding costs incurred will be reimbursed.

20.5 A foster carer can only claim for mileage incurred when doing additional tasks if this would cause their total weekly mileage (including transport for the children in placement) to exceed 90 miles per child. If the total exceeds 90 miles per child then additional mileage can be claimed, as described in section 18.

## **Children in boarding school**

21.0 The following payments are made where a child attends boarding school and a foster placement is considered to be their home base:

- Whilst at school, 40% of the maintenance allowance will be paid.
- Whilst in placement, the full maintenance allowance and any reward payment for their Band will be paid.

## **Children in hospital, custody or secure accommodation**

22.0 Where the care plan is for the child to return to the placement, the full maintenance allowance will be payable for the first two weeks. This will be reduced to 50% for the remaining period. The reward payment for Band 3 carers will cease when the child is not in placement. The reward payment for Band 4 carers will continue as described in section 3.1.

## **Sickness**

23.0 Typically, the carer's family or network will assist so that the child can remain in placement. If this is not possible then backup arrangements with other foster carers should be made. No adjustment to the carer's payments will be made for the first two weeks in this case.

23.1 If the carer has a serious illness and an alternative placement is required then 50% of the maintenance allowance will be payable for a further two weeks only. The reward payment for Band 3 carers will cease when the child is not in placement. The reward payment for Band 4 carers will continue as described in section 3.1.

## **Disputes**

24.0 If a child is moved due to an allegation or complaint then 50% of the maintenance allowance will continue to be paid until it is clear whether or not the child is to return to the placement (not to exceed eight weeks in duration). The reward payment for Band 3 carers will cease when the child is not in placement. The reward payment for Band 4 carers will continue as described in section 3.1.

## **Ending of placements and overpayments**

**25.0 All foster carers have a responsibility to notify their social worker AND Plymouth Fostercare by phone/fax/post/email on the day a child leaves the placement or the next working day.** Ending of placements must be reported to child's Social Worker **and** Plymouth Fostercare as follows:

Telephone: 01752 308777 (ask for child payments)

Fax: 01752 308740

Email: [DssC&FChildPayments@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:DssC&FChildPayments@plymouth.gov.uk)

Address: Child Payments, Plymouth Fostercare, Plymouth City Council, Plymouth, PL1 2AA.

25.1 If a foster carer continues to receive payments after reporting that a child has left their care then they must contact Plymouth Fostercare immediately. Any overpayments must be repaid in full to Plymouth City Council.

25.2 The computer system will automatically recover all overpayments by making deductions from subsequent payments.

25.3 The system will attempt to recover the total overpayment from the next payment due, or where the overpayment amount exceeds normal payments for that week, from subsequent weeks until the overpayment has been recovered.

25.4 If a carer wishes to defer a full recovery of the allowance payments due, we would seek to recover a minimum of 50% of any subsequent weekly payments. However in certain circumstances, alternative recovery arrangements of less than 50% can only be made subject to the agreement of the carer's supervising social worker, Team Manager and Service Manager. Any requests to vary, negotiate or write off overpayments will be assessed on a case-by-case basis according to circumstances. Any final decision will be the responsibility of the Permanency and Placements Service Manager with reference to the Finance Manager. Where there are no further placements planned then an invoice will be issued.

25.5 Overpayments that are not repaid are a drain on Plymouth City Council resources and will be pursued actively through debt recovery action and ultimately through the courts/bailiffs if necessary. It is in carer's own interests to settle outstanding overpayments promptly.

### **Ending payments when children reach age 18**

26.0 Once a young person reaches age 18, they are no longer legally fostered. This means that all fostering payments will ordinarily cease at this point.

26.1 If the young person is in full-time education then it may be agreed to continue paying the foster carer a weekly allowance equivalent to their previous fostering allowance until the end of the academic year. This must be agreed by the Children's Resource Panel. (Full-time education is defined as the period while a child is at school or college. This excludes university, degrees or diplomas.)

26.2 If the foster carer is on Band 3 or 4 and can continue to take other foster placements then their reward payment will continue, since this is a household payment. However, the reward payment will cease if no other children are in placement, after any notice period listed in the Payments Booklet. (Notice may be given in advance of the young person reaching 18, so that the reward payment can be stopped on their 18th birthday.)

### **Young People living independently/semi-independently or who have left care**

27.0 This area is now covered by the Care Leavers regulations - please see I6+ allowance booklet for details. This covers issues such as supported lodgings, cost of rent and accommodation, personal allowances, education and training incentives and grants.

27.1 When a young person goes into a training flat for up to six weeks before returning to foster care, the foster carer will continue to receive the full maintenance allowance and reward payment.

### **Adjustments to allowances where the young person is under 18 years of age and earning but still placed with foster carers**

28.0 Social workers must notify the Finance Section if they become aware that a young person in foster care is in full-time paid employment. Plymouth City Council will carry out an assessment to ascertain the young person's contribution towards their keep from NET earnings. Fares to and from work, Trade Union subscriptions and meal expenses should be deducted from net pay. The contribution should be paid by the young person to their foster carer, and Plymouth City Council will reduce the maintenance allowance accordingly.

**Please note that the above should in no way discourage young people from doing part-time jobs that do not interfere with their education, such as Saturday jobs. These should be encouraged to help young people become financially independent.**

28.1 Details of how to undertake the assessment are available from the Children's Social Care Accountants on 01752 307372. These arrangements should be regularly reviewed within the care planning process.

### **Young people remaining with carers post 18**

29.0 When young people reach 18 years of age they are no longer fostered and foster carers are not eligible for the fostering payments described in this booklet. Should the young person be in school or college at that point in time then, with the written agreement of the Assistant Director or delegated manager, the fostering maintenance allowance can continue to be paid until the end of that academic year.

29.1 Any payments to be made via the 16+ Service can commence from the day after the young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

29.2 In all cases, the young person will have a Core Assessment and Pathway Plan setting out their needs and arrangements for accommodation and support.

29.3 If the young person wishes to remain with their former foster carers, then funding can be obtained from two separate sources, **not from the usual foster carer boarding out budget.**

29.4 The Basic Room Rent element of the funding will be applied from Housing Benefit on behalf of the young person, where possible.

29.5 The Support and Care elements of the funding will be met from the 16+ Service budget. The Support and Care elements reflect the needs of the young person as specified in the Core Assessment and Pathway Plan. These will be aggregated into 'hours' and the 'provider' will be paid an hourly rate of £6.50.

29.6 The young person will not be asked to contribute any money towards the Support or Care elements of the funding. Their support needs will be reviewed every six months.

29.7 The cost of food is not included in any of the funding sought on behalf of the young person. It is expected that all young people will contribute £20 per week towards the cost of food. The young person should give this directly to the provider.

29.8 Young people remaining in training or education post-18 may be entitled to further allowances (see the 16+ Service allowance book).

### **Foster carers' property – Insurance, damages, theft etc.**

30.0 Where a foster carer's home or property is damaged or items are alleged to have been stolen by the activities of a young person in their care, the foster carer should first report the matter to their supervising social worker. They should then refer to their domestic/car insurance policy and the police if necessary. Where an insurance policy does not provide cover, or the claim is refused, Plymouth City Council will consider making a payment depending on the circumstances. The supervising social worker will need to prepare a report for consideration by the Permanency and Placements Service Manager. Only the Service Manager, in conjunction with Plymouth City Council's Insurance Officers, can agree any compensation.

30.1 Any placement which poses a potentially significant risk to person or property must be detailed on the placement plan. A risk assessment should be undertaken and the safer caring agreement updated. The supervising social worker must clearly report such risks to their line manager who should in turn consult a Plymouth Fostercare Manager so a decision can be made about whether the risk is significant enough to be reported to Plymouth City Council's Insurance Officers.

## **Payment arrangements**

31.0 Payments are processed weekly on a Monday, covering all notifications received up to Friday of the previous week. The payment period is Monday to the following Sunday.

31.1 Payments will be made via BACS transfer. These payments will be credited to accounts on a Friday, with funds available on that date.

31.2 On bank holiday Monday weeks, payments will be processed one working day early.

31.3 Special arrangements apply at Christmas and New Year (and sometimes Easter), where payments are usually made in advance. Details will be notified at the appropriate time.

31.4 Remittance advice slips will be sent to foster carers via email, apart from in exceptional circumstances such as the foster carer not having a computer.

31.5 The payment advice slip gives basic details of the allowance, initials of the child and payment week. Any arrears are broken down and shown for past payment weeks.

### Delays in payments

31.6 If any problems with the payment run will delay payments by one working day then Plymouth City Council will not contact foster carers in writing. If a foster carer notices that their payment has been delayed then they should email [DssC&FChildPayments@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:DssC&FChildPayments@plymouth.gov.uk). An auto-response will be set up to reply to everyone who contacts this address, stating when payment will be made and providing a contact number for any foster carers who require emergency cash payments.

## **APPENDIX I – ROLE PROFILE AND CRITERIA FOR EACH PAYMENT BAND**

### **Band I**

Band I includes:

- Newly approved foster carers.
- Approved family and friends carers approved to look after a specific child, who can choose to remain on Band I if they do not wish to meet the criteria for the higher Bands.

### Minimum skills required for all those approved as foster carers for Plymouth City Council

General:

- An ability to provide a good standard of care to other people's children which promotes healthy, emotional, physical and sexual development as well as their health and educational achievement.
- An ability to work closely with children's families, and others who are important to the child, in a non-judgemental way.
- An ability to set appropriate boundaries, and manage children's behaviour within these, without the use of physical or inappropriate punishment.
- Knowledge of normal child development and an ability to listen and communicate with children appropriate to their age and understanding.

Providing a safe and caring environment:

- An ability to ensure that the children are cared for in a home where they are safe from harm or abuse.
- An ability to help children keep themselves safe from harm or abuse, and to know how to seek help if their safety is threatened.

Working as part of a team:

- An ability to work with other professional people and contribute to the department's planning for the child/young person.
- An ability to communicate effectively.
- An ability to keep information confidential.
- An ability to promote equality, diversity and the rights of individuals and groups within society.

Own development:

- An ability to appreciate how personal experiences have affected themselves and their families, and the impact that fostering is likely to have on them all.
- An ability to have people and links within the community, which provide support.
- An ability to use training opportunities and to improve skills.

- An ability to sustain positive relationships and maintain effective functioning through periods of stress.

#### CWDC Standards:

- All Band 1 carers must complete the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Standards for Foster Carer Training, Support and Development. General foster carers must do this within a year of approval and family and friends carers approved to care for a specific child must do so within 18 months of approval. This applies to all approved carers within a household. (For couples, the completion of a single workbook for the household is permissible although separate evidence must be provided to show that each partner meets the Standards.)

#### **Band 2**

Band 2 includes foster carers who meet all the relevant criteria for Band 1 and who, in addition, have:

- A minimum of one years experience of fostering and have had their first Review positively appraised by the Fostering Panel and agreed by the agency decision-maker.
- Attended a minimum of 50% of support group meetings or can demonstrate that they regularly access equivalent support from other sources (such as networking with other foster carers, or use of Fostering Network resources).
- Maintained a daily record when children have been in placement.
- Contributed written reports for child's review and attended child review meetings.
- Attended school meetings for the child, including Personal Education Plan meetings (if applicable).
- Produced a book about their household to introduce themselves to children. The exception to this is if the carer already has long-term placements, in which case they must be committed to producing a book about their household as soon as they become available to take new placements.
- Regular use of Plymouth Fostercare Online.

Foster carers must also provide evidence of the following key skills:

- An ability to help children develop appropriate social behaviour, helping them to become more independent, and enabling them to cope with their emotions as appropriate to their age and ability.
- An ability to assist children in developing basic aspects of memory, thinking, imagination and manipulative skills through play etc.
- An ability to help children develop their language skills and general self-expression.
- An ability to help children learn the boundaries of acceptable behaviour without resorting to physical punishment, and within the requirement of current policy, handle children's negative reactions and unacceptable behaviour, and encourage positive behaviour patterns.
- An ability to plan for and provide an appropriate routine for children which balances the child's needs, including those of play and learning, and gives goals which can be achieved in measuring the child's level of understanding and development.

- An ability to observe and respond appropriately to the possibility of child abuse and neglect.
- An ability to observe and assess children, clearly recording development.
- An ability to challenge appropriately, to ensure that foster care practice is anti-discriminatory and respects all children and their families.
- An ability to advocate on behalf of children.
- An ability to help children and families cope with loss and bereavement – this may be because of life threatening illness, separation through adoption, or loss of their family.
- An ability to work closely with other professionals in carrying out individual therapeutic programmes, skills development, behaviour modification or educational programmes with children with appropriate supervision and consultation.
- An ability to work closely with other professionals, sharing information, exchanging skills, and working under guidance of, or in collaboration with, other professionals with the child.

Please note: There is no expectation that a carer would undertake all these tasks at the same time. They will however, need to demonstrate their ability to undertake them and be available and willing to do so depending on the demands of individual placements.

### Training

Band 2 carers must have successfully completed the following core training within the first year of approval and before moving to Band 2:

<b>Main Carer</b>	<b>Second Carer (if applicable)</b>
Completion of Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Standards for Foster Carer Training, Support and Development	
First Aid	First Aid
Safer Care	Safer Care
Introduction to Child Protection	
Equality and Diversity	
Introduction to Attachment	

Within the first year of approval, additional training can be undertaken; some training is available online, however online training should only be undertaken by the second foster carer within the fostering household (if applicable), as attendance for the main carer is desirable. A maximum of three online courses will be allowed per carer per year unless there are good reasons why more might be needed. This will be agreed by the Supervising Social Worker and the Fostering Team Manager.

In the second year of approval and to maintain Band 2 status, the main carer must also complete the following training. These requirements can be met through attendance on training courses or demonstrated through other learning opportunities, but must be evidenced prior to the foster carer’s Annual Review and agreed by the supervising social worker:

- Supporting children in their education (if approved for children aged 3+)
- Promoting the health of children in care

- Working with birth parents
- Preparing children and young people for permanence (if applicable)
- Preparing young people for independence (if approved for young people aged 14+)
- All carers in the household must also have undertaken any training specified at the point of approval or subsequently through supervision, performance appraisal or annual review which is identified as necessary by the supervising social worker

First aid and safer care training must be refreshed every three years. Other courses may from time to time be updated and therefore foster carers will be notified to refresh these.

### **Band 3**

#### Role profile

Foster carers within this Band will have the skills, knowledge and experience to work with most children who are in care. They will have the confidence and skills to manage most behavioural issues and situations, referring to other professionals for support and guidance as appropriate. The ability to work to, and comply with, agreed Care Plans will be essential at all times.

At least one carer in the household must not ordinarily have any other paid/unpaid employment, and must be available for the care of the child if they are not in school. They will be active in developing and maintaining their skills through training and where appropriate, will be willing to take on other activities such as supervising contact for children placed with other foster carers, support work, running support groups and helping with the training of new or other carers.

The carer will have a full understanding of the importance of poor attachments and how they impede children's development. Moreover, they will have an understanding of the importance of strategies to address these issues.

#### Specification and criteria

*(E – essential requirement, D – desirable requirement)*

- All the essential requirements for Bands 1 and 2 must be met. (E)
- All carers within the household must have a minimum of three years experience of fostering or other relevant experience in a childcare setting. (E)
- All carers within the household must have proven resilience to the stresses that fostering (or equivalent activities) can bring. In addition, they must demonstrate that they engage in their childcare practise in a professional manner at all times. (E)
- The carer must provide a bedroom for the sole use of each child or young person fostered, apart from in exceptional circumstances (such as young sibling groups or existing long-term placements where a risk assessment has been carried out). (E)

*At least one carer in each household:*

- At least one carer in the household must not ordinarily have any other paid/unpaid employment, unless it can be demonstrated with the other carer (if applicable) that at least one person will be available at **all** times for the care of all the children in placement that does not compromise safer caring or risk management plans. (E)
- Demonstrate and maintain a sound awareness and knowledge of current legislation relevant to the fostering task, issues in child care and fostering good practice. (E)

- Proven experience within a fostering context of caring for children assessed as presenting behaviour which causes significant management problems. (E)
- Demonstrate from proven experience the ability to care for children and work with families coping with all manifestations of loss (bereavement, loss of family etc.). This can include complex adoption cases. (E)
- Provide evidence from past placement practise, the ability to work to individual therapeutic programme plans with other professionals for the benefit of children in their care. (E)
- Ability to work directly with families in the foster home and/or community where appropriate, to promote contact, rehabilitate children home or prevent children from being removed from their home environment. (E)
- Ability to provide evidence that they can consistently produce accurate records of events that can be used in formal processes (courts). (E)
- An understanding of attachment theories and their application to the care of young people. (E)
- Willingness to be available (where appropriate given the needs of the carer's current placements), to assist in promoting the fostering service in activities such as recruiting new carers, running or co-facilitating in training of other foster carers and prospective foster carers, support groups, supporting other foster carers and other activities associated with the fostering task. This will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, agreed with the supervising social worker and will depend on the foster carer's skills. Carers will never be asked to do these tasks for more than five hours in any one week. (E)

Please note: There is no expectation that carers would undertake all the above tasks at the same time. They will however, need to demonstrate their ability to undertake them and be available and willing to do so depending on the demands of the individual placements. This approach allows some carers to take on responsibilities for a supportive role in relation to other carers whilst some may choose to further develop their childcare skills.

*Second carer (if applicable):*

Evidence of their ability to assist and support the other carer in the delivery of the fostering tasks listed above in the criteria for the other carer (above). (E)

### Training

The following training must be completed before moving to Band 3:

<b>Main Carer</b>	<b>Second Carer (if applicable)</b>
Completion of Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Standards for Foster Carer Training, Support and Development	
First Aid	First Aid
Safer Care	Safer Care
Introduction to Child Protection	Introduction to Child Protection
Equality and Diversity	Equality and Diversity
Advanced Attachment training	Introduction to Attachment
Supporting children in their education (if	Supporting children in their education (if

approved for children aged 3+)	approved for children aged 3+)
Promoting the health of children in care	Promoting the health of children in care
Working with birth parents	Working with birth parents
Preparing children and young people for permanence (if applicable)	Preparing children and young people for permanence (if applicable)
Preparing young people for independence (if approved for young people aged 14+)	Preparing young people for independence (if approved for young people aged 14+)
Completion of at least three relevant training courses or other development opportunities per year, in addition to refreshing the core training as required. Due to their duration and intensity, some courses (such as the three-module Attachment course) will count as the additional three courses. If foster carers have undertaken other forms of learning and can demonstrate a level of competence in the above areas then this may be considered by the Reviewing Officer at the Annual Review and noted as evidence instead of attendance	Completion of at least two relevant training courses or other development opportunities per year, in addition to refreshing the core training as required. Due to their duration and intensity, some courses (such as the three-module Attachment course) will count as the additional three courses. If foster carers have undertaken other forms of learning and can demonstrate a level of competence in the above areas then this may be considered by the Reviewing Officer at the Annual Review and noted as evidence instead of attendance
NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, Level 3 BTEC in Advanced Skills in Foster Care or equivalent. (DESIRABLE)  This may include other relevant professional qualifications in working with children and young people e.g. social work, child care, teaching, youth and community work, probation or nursing. (This criterion is desirable. Carers not meeting this criterion must show a particularly high amount of evidence that they have this level of skill. This can come from sources such as outcomes for children they have cared for, examples of multi-agency work they have done, annual review paperwork, testimonies and reports from children and professionals they have worked with, etc.)	

First aid and safer care training must be refreshed every three years. Other courses may from time to time be updated and therefore foster carers will be notified to refresh these.

#### **Band 4**

##### Role profile

It is anticipated that Band 4 carers will look after children and young people who might otherwise require specialist residential placements. The level of risk management that these carers undertake will distinguish them from carers on other payment levels.

Band 4 carers will be likely to care for children with extremely challenging behaviours, severe attachment issues, a background of chronic neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse or high dependency needs. The children may also be exhibiting abusive behaviour themselves that stems from this early childhood trauma. The carers will be expected to be skilled and resilient in working with and living with children with these histories and behaviours.

There will also be foster carers within Band 4 who offer highly skilled specialist care to children and young people with complex health needs, physical and/or learning disabilities which often require round the clock routines (for example managing gastric feeding or resuscitation situations).

Complex parent and child assessment placements will also fall within Band 4, where the foster carer is expected to make a significant contribution to the assessment process.

Band 4 foster carers will have fully developed skills, knowledge, experience and resilience in working with children with challenging behaviours and extremely complex special needs, including:

- significant learning and behavioural difficulties
- autistic spectrum disorder leading to complex additional needs
- severe emotional and behavioural disorders
- extremely challenging or offending behaviour
- significant attachment issues that have a major impact on child development
- specialist complex physical or overlapping need
- mental ill health
- parent and child placements requiring a significant contribution to the assessment process

The majority of children in care have some level of 'special needs'. In isolation, the fact that a child may have special needs such as autism, offending behaviour or attachment difficulties does not mean that their needs can only be met by a Band 4 carer, as all foster carers are trained and expected to deal with some level of special needs. What distinguishes a Band 4 foster carer is their ability to manage a combination of multiple special needs that require a level of care over and above the expectations that are placed on 'mainstream' foster carers. It is likely that the children needing Band 4 carers might otherwise require a specialist residential placement due to the difficulty of meeting their needs within a family environment, or even as the sole child within a family.

Although fostering will assume a major part in planning daily family life for foster carers on all payment Bands, this will particularly apply to all members of Band 4 households. For example, some children may pose risks to other children who visit the foster home, which need to be carefully managed.

The foster placement will be at the centre of professional input from several sources (such as Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Education). In most cases carers will be expected to care for one child at a time, initially with a high emphasis on assessment (including parent and child assessments), and latterly playing a prime role in the delivery of complex therapeutic/health programmes. It will be expected that placements will be thoroughly planned, supervised and supported within a multi-agency approach.

For carers of children and young people with complex emotional or behavioural needs, the foster carer will need skills in diffusing issues of the impact of the young person in the local community, being alongside a young person in their education, and settling and handling very challenging and aggressive behaviour on a regular basis. The carer will not only show resilience but the capacity to

be innovative with a problem-solving approach in their delivery of good child care. Within the foster home, the carer will provide complex therapeutic care programmes within a genuine family lifestyle. Maintaining the appropriate balance will test the skills of the carer and other professionals involved. The carer will be committed to the principle of 'planned' closures or transfers of children.

Carers of children and young people with severe and enduring physical needs must have the ability to provide complex interventions to maintain the child's physical health and wellbeing (such as gastrostomy feeding, suctioning, intimate care with older children, or management and preparation of complex medications). Training and support will be provided to enable the carer to meet the specific medical needs of each child or young person. In many cases, the foster home must be suitable for adaptations for children with mobility difficulties.

With this level of commitment, the carer will have guaranteed support and respite time.

### Specification and criteria

*(E – essential requirement, D – desirable requirement)*

- All the essential and desirable requirements for Bands 1, 2 and 3 must be met. (E)
- In most cases, all carers within the household must have a minimum of five years relevant experience in a childcare setting. (E)
- All carers within the household can demonstrate a full understanding of attachment theory, its application to the care of young people, can work to therapeutic plans where this is an intrinsic component and can demonstrate their own 'personal' development in this area. They must have attended training on this topic. (E)
- There is an expectation that in most cases, the carer will have no other children under the age of 16 living within the household. (An example of an exception to this is carers of children with disabilities, where it may be appropriate for other children to be in the household.) (E – in most cases)
- Ability to provide a bedroom for the sole use of each child or young person fostered. (E)
- All carers within the household must have completed all core training and make an ongoing commitment to completing five or more courses per annum thereafter. (E)

*At least one carer in each household:*

- At least one carer in each household shall be committed to the fostering task as their daily role and must not have any paid/unpaid employment that will prevent them from being available for the child full-time. (E)
- Willingness to be available to assist in promoting the fostering service in activities such as recruiting new carers, running or co-facilitating in training of other foster carers and prospective foster carers, supporting other foster carers, support work to the children of other carers (including supervision of contact), support groups and other activities associated with the fostering task. Band 4 carers will be expected to carry out these tasks within the weekly reward payment. We recognise that some placements may make this inappropriate, so these tasks will be negotiated on an individual basis. Carers will not be asked to do these tasks for more than five hours in any one week.
- With regard to the requirement to provide placements to children and young people with specialist needs, at least one carer in each household must provide evidence of the ability or proven skills in delivering care to these challenging placements consistently,

working to complex care plans and providing written assessments of situations as part of a multi-professional approach. (E)

- Ability to contribute to and question professional plans for young people in placement, and to positively work with the agreed plan. (E)
- Proven ability to deal with crises and rapid change in a calm and professional manner, referring for help as necessary. (E)
- Ability to remain resilient and child-focussed in challenging situations and if placements are in danger of breakdown, to be committed to safe practice and planned resolutions at all times. (E)
- Ability to produce written records and assessments where the 'quality' provided can be used as evidence in court or other formal settings. (E)
- Proven commitment to developing skills, researching practise issues and own learning needs. (E)

*Second carer (if applicable):*

- Demonstrable ability to assist and support the other carer in the delivery of the tasks listed in the above criteria. (E)

### Training

The following training must be completed before moving to Band 4:

<b>Main Carer</b>	<b>Second Carer (if applicable)</b>
Completion of Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Standards for Foster Carer Training, Support and Development.	
First Aid	First Aid
Safer Care	Safer Care
Introduction to Child Protection	Introduction to Child Protection
Equality and Diversity	Equality and Diversity
Advanced Attachment training (the exact details of this are currently being considered)	Introduction to Attachment
Supporting children in their education (if approved for children aged 3+)	Supporting children in their education (if approved for children aged 3+)
Promoting the health of children in care	Promoting the health of children in care
Working with birth parents	Working with birth parents
Preparing children and young people for permanence (if applicable)	Preparing children and young people for permanence (if applicable)
Preparing young people for independence (if approved for young people aged 14+)	Preparing young people for independence (if approved for young people aged 14+)
Completion of at least five relevant training courses or other development opportunities per year, in addition to refreshing the core training as required. Due to their duration and intensity, some courses (such as the three-	Completion of at least five relevant training courses or other development opportunities per year, in addition to refreshing the core training as required. Due to their duration and intensity, some courses (such as the three-

<p>module Attachment course) will count as the additional three courses. If foster carers have undertaken other forms of learning and can demonstrate a level of competence in the above areas then this may be considered by the Reviewing Officer at the Annual Review and noted as evidence instead of attendance</p>	<p>module Attachment course) will count as the additional three courses. If foster carers have undertaken other forms of learning and can demonstrate a level of competence in the above areas then this may be considered by the Reviewing Officer at the Annual Review and noted as evidence instead of attendance</p>
<p>NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, Level 3 BTEC in Advanced Skills in Foster Care or equivalent (ESSENTIAL)</p> <p>This may include other relevant professional qualifications in working with children and young people e.g. social work, child care, teaching, youth and community work, probation or nursing.</p>	<p>NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young people. Level 3 BTEC in Advanced Skills in Foster Care or equivalent (DESIRABLE)</p> <p>This may include other relevant professional qualifications in working with children and young people e.g. social work, child care, teaching, youth and community work, probation or nursing.</p>
<p>Willingness to complete specific training relating to the child, for example to enable them to meet the needs of children with profound and multiple disabilities and complex health needs</p>	

First aid and safer care training must be refreshed every three years. Other courses may from time to time be updated and therefore foster carers will be notified to refresh these.

## APPENDIX 2 – CLOTHING

The following guidelines may assist carers and social workers in assessing what clothing is considered necessary and reasonable. This should be seen as the *minimum* required. The weekly maintenance allowance should enable carers to maintain and increase the level of clothing.

### Babies

- Disposable nappies
- Bottles
- 3 pairs pyjamas
- 6 baby-grows
- 1 zip-through suit (for outdoor use)
- 6 vests

### Young children

- 1 coat
- 7 sets of underwear
- 3 pairs of pyjamas
- 1 dressing gown
- 7 pairs of socks/tights
- 3 pairs of trousers/skirts
- 4 shirts/blouses
- 2 tee shirts
- 2 sweaters/sweatshirts/cardigans
- 1 pair wellington boots
- 1 pair shoes
- 1 pair trainers
- 1 pair slippers

### Teenagers

- School uniform
- Sports equipment
- 3 outfits for out of school
- Underwear
- Coat
- Shoes/trainers

Where a child is changing placement, it is expected that they will move with a reasonable amount of clothing that fits and is in good condition.

Children should also be provided with a suitcase or bag for transporting clothes.

Receipts to cover expenditure must be returned to the child's social worker.

## APPENDIX 3 - SUMMARY OF FOSTERING ALLOWANCES 2011-2012

This sheet contains information on the allowances and reward payments available to Plymouth City Council foster carers from April 2011 to March 2012. Please note:

- A maintenance allowance is paid per child. All reward payments are per household.
- A young person can be considered fostered up to and including the day of their 18th birthday (see section 29 for 18+ information).

### Band 1 foster carers

Age of child	Weekly maintenance allowance	Weekly reward payment	Total weekly payment
0 - 4	£131.53	£0	£131.53
5 - 10	£149.80	£0	£149.80
11 - 15	£186.48	£0	£186.48
16 – 18	£226.80	£0	£226.80

### Band 2 foster carers

Age of child	Weekly maintenance allowance	Weekly reward payment	Total weekly payment
0 - 4	£164.50	£0	£164.50
5 - 10	£179.13	£0	£179.13
11 - 15	£208.25	£0	£208.25
16 – 18	£237.23	£0	£237.23

### Band 3 foster carers

Age of child	Weekly maintenance allowance	Weekly reward payment	Total weekly payment
0 - 4	£164.50	£100	£264.50
5 - 10	£179.13	£100	£279.13
11 - 15	£208.25	£100	£308.25
16 – 18	£237.23	£100	£337.23

### Band 4 foster carers

Age of child	Weekly maintenance allowance	Weekly reward payment	Total weekly payment
0 - 4	£164.50	£411	£575.50
5 - 10	£179.13	£411	£590.13
11 - 15	£208.25	£411	£619.25
16 – 18	£237.23	£411	£648.23