

# Payment for Skills

---

## SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter relates to fostering service payment for skills scheme.

## Contents

---

1. **Introduction**
2. **Pathways of learning**
3. **Levels**
4. **Training Passport**
5. **Payment for skills panel**
6. **Exceptions**
7. **Short Break carers**
8. **Parent and Child Placements**

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION, GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION

Fostering Services:-National Minimum Standards – Standard 20

### 1. Introduction

---

Derby City fostering service has a Payment For Skills scheme for foster carers. The purpose of this scheme is to aid recruitment and retention of foster carers and reward them financially for their contribution to the fostering service. Foster carers are expected to attend training allowing them to gain skills and underpinning knowledge to achieve the best outcomes for the children/young people they care for.

### 2. Pathways of Training

---

A pathway of mandatory training and optional training is set out for carers. There are four Levels A-D in the pathway and each level is attached to a payment.

There is clear guidance on timescales to complete the training. If only one foster carer from each home attends a course there is an expectation that any relevant information from the training is read by and discussed with other

carers in the home. For households with two foster carers they both need to complete Paediatric First Aid and Introduction to Safeguarding. Each carer should complete a minimum of 10 hours of learning each year.

When carers have completed the mandatory training for the level they are on and do not wish to progress to a higher level, they still need to maintain their learning and will need to submit their training passport to their annual review panel every year. If the fostering panel have concerns about the level of training completed, they can refer back to the Payment For Skills panel for a review of the carers payment level.

### 3. Levels

---

Prior to approval carers need to have completed Skills to Foster training, and met National Minimum Standards in their form F. Carers will also have the opportunity to attend 3 courses:-

- Recording Skills
- Contact
- Introduction to Safeguarding

When carers have been approved, they need to attend/view the Induction Day (face-face/virtual). Carers will have 12 months to complete their Training Support and Development Standards (18 months for family and friend carers) and have them verified by the TSD panel.

For foster carers who commit to training, complete their Training Support and Development standards and have had them verified, they can move to Level A.

If carers wish to be considered to progress up a level and it is at least 2 years since they progressed to the previous level, their training passport will be presented to the Payment for Skills panel, who will make a decision about progression up to the next level.

Foster carers who can only foster children 0-2 years will be unable to proceed past Level B unless they can extend their approval to 0-18 year old children/young people with more complex needs.

In cases where a carer takes on a child with a complex level of needs above expectations of their current Payment For Skills level, – additional allowances may be available which will be child specific and will be considered at the Payment For Skills panel.

#### Level A

- Progression to Level A on the Payment For Skills Pathway will require a year's fostering experience.
- The foster carer will be available to care for the child/children as stated at their approval, is flexible to be able to fully meet the needs of the child/ren in placement for time out of school, to attend appointments with the child or transporting to and from school, appointments and family time.
- The foster carer is expected to give at least 4 weeks written notice of ending a placement.
- If the child ends the placement by e.g., by absconding, refusing to return, the foster carer will receive up to 4 weeks fee at Level A after the child has moved from the placement. If the placement ends because of child protection concerns relating to the carer, no fee will be payable once the child has moved from the placement.
- The foster carer will have attended/viewed the mandatory Induction Day.
- The foster carer will have completed all the mandatory training courses as detailed at Level A in the training passport.

NB. All Mandatory training to be refreshed every 5 years and every 3 years for Paediatric First Aid

- The foster carer will have attended any additional training course identified by them or their SSW and this is recorded in their passport.
- The written overview of learning within the Training Passport will have been completed by the foster carer and SSW.
- The foster carer will have attended a minimum of 2 support groups in the last year and dates will be added to their training record held by Workforce Learning and Development.
- The foster carer will have had 100% of their Training Support and Development Standards completed and signed off by their supervising social worker and verified.
- The foster carer is expected to maintain clear, current and secure electronic records on the children in placement which have been seen and signed off by the supervising social worker. They are also expected to evidence that these records are stored securely, and that the storage reflects the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- All records pertaining to a child who has left placement to be returned to the fostering service.
- The foster carer will have had a successful annual review and the fostering service will need to evidence how they have supported the carer to meet the Fostering National Minimum standards.
- The supervising social worker for the foster carer will attend Payment For Skills panel to present the application for Level A.
- The foster carer will supply their updated training passport evidencing their training and development record for the Payment For Skills panel.
- Level A will be awarded if the Payment For Skills Panel have evidence that the foster carer has achieved the required level of training and experience. The requirements are detailed within the training passport.
- Fee level A is paid to the foster carer for each child in their care.
- To maintain Level A, foster carers must provide evidence in their training passport that they are continuing to develop their skills and knowledge by booking further training and e-learning or evidencing that they have undertaken appropriate reading, study or gained experience in other ways. This further development will have been evidenced in their annual review report to fostering panel and quality assured by the fostering team manager.
- The foster carer will evidence through their updated passport, that they have a commitment to further training beyond the mandatory courses. Evidence of further training attended will be required for progression to Level B.
- The foster carer will be notified in writing of the decision of the Payment For Skills panel. Any appeals will be dealt with by the Deputy Head of Service for fostering and their decision is final.

## **Level B**

- Progression to Level B on the Payment for Skills Pathway will require minimum two years' experience at Level A.
- The foster carer will be available to care for the child/children as stated at their approval, is flexible to be able to fully meet the needs of the child/ren in placement for time out of school, to attend appointments with the child or transporting to and from school, appointments and family time.
- The foster carer is expected to give at least 4 weeks written notice of ending a placement.

- If the child ends the placement by e.g., by absconding, refusing to return, the foster carer will receive up to 4 weeks fee at Level B after the child has moved from the placement. If the placement ends because of child protection concerns relating to the carer, no fee will be payable once the child has moved from the placement.
- The foster carer will have completed all the mandatory training courses as detailed at Level B in the training Passport.

NB. All Mandatory training to be refreshed every 5 years and every 3 years for Paediatric First aid.

- The foster carer will have attended any additional training course identified by them or their SSW and this is recorded in their passport.
- The written overview of learning within the training passport will have been completed by the foster carer and SSW.
- The foster carer will be able to evidence that they continue to update their safeguarding knowledge, and this must include internet safety. This can be achieved through reading, research or self-directed learning.
- The foster carer will have attended a minimum of 4 support groups in the last 2 years and dates will be added to their training record held by Workforce Learning and Development.
- The foster carer is expected to maintain clear, current and secure records on the children in placement which have been seen and signed off by the supervising social worker. They are also expected to evidence that these records are stored securely, and that the storage reflects the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- All records pertaining to a child who has left placement to be returned to the fostering service.
- The foster carer will have had a successful annual review and the fostering service will need to evidence how they have supported the carers to meet the Fostering National Minimum standards
- The Supervising social worker for the foster carer will attend fostering Payment For Skills panel to present the application for Level B.
- The foster carer will supply their updated training Passport evidencing their training and development record. Level B will be awarded if the Payment For Skills panel have evidence that the foster carer has achieved the required level of training and experience. The requirements are detailed within the training passport.
- Fee level B is paid to the foster carer for each child in their care.
- To maintain Level B, foster carers must provide evidence in their training passport that they are continuing to develop their skills and knowledge by booking and attending further training and e-learning or evidencing that they have undertaken appropriate reading, study or gained experience in other ways. This further development will have been evidenced in their annual review report to fostering panel. and quality assured by the fostering team manager
- The foster carer will evidence through their updated passport, that they have a commitment to further training beyond the mandatory courses. Evidence of further training attended will be required for progression to Level C. In addition, carers who wish to progress to level C must be willing to care for children across the 0-18 age range including those who may have a complex level of need.
- The foster carer will be notified in writing of the decision of the Payment For Skills panel. Any appeals will be dealt with by the deputy head of service for fostering and their decision is final.

## Level C

- Progression to Level C on the Payment for Skills Pathway will require minimum two years' experience at Level B.
- To be considered for level C carers must be prepared to be approved and willing to consider placements in the 0-18 age range, including those who may have a complex level of need.
- In addition, level C carers must be prepared to support the fostering service more widely, for example buddying, supporting training, interviewing staff/students, supporting with recruitment events or being involved in the committee of the Foster Care Association (FCA)
- The foster carer will be available to care for the child/children as stated at their approval, is flexible to be able to fully meet the needs of the child/ren in placement for time out of school, to attend appointments with the child or transporting to and from school, appointments and family time.
- The foster carer is expected to give at least 4 weeks written notice of ending a placement.
- If the child ends the placement by e.g., by absconding, refusing to return, the foster carer will receive up to 4 weeks fee at Level C after the child has moved from the placement. If the placement ends because of child protection concerns relating to the carer, no fee will be payable once the child has moved from the placement.
- The foster carer will have completed all the mandatory training courses as detailed at Level C in the training Passport.

NB. All Mandatory training to be refreshed every 5 years and every 3 years for Paediatric First aid.

- The foster carer will have attended any additional training course identified by them or their SSW this is recorded in their passport.
- The written overview of learning within the training passport will have been completed by the foster carer and SSW.
- The foster carer will be able to evidence that they continue to update their safeguarding knowledge, and this must include internet safety. This can be achieved through reading, research or self-directed learning.
- The foster carer will have attended a minimum of 4 support groups in the last 2 years and dates will be added to their training record held by Workforce Learning and Development.
- The foster carer will need to evidence their contribution to fostering services: Mentoring of new foster carers through participating in the buddying scheme, recruitment /publicity events, supporting training activities.
- The foster carer is expected to maintain clear, current and secure electronic records on the children in placement which have been seen and signed off by the supervising social worker. They are also expected to evidence that these records are stored securely, and that the storage reflects the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- All records pertaining to a child who has left placement to be returned to the fostering service.
- The foster carer will have had a successful annual review and the fostering service will need to evidence how they have supported the carer to meet the Fostering National Minimum standards.
- The Supervising social worker for the foster carer will attend fostering Payment For Skills panel to present the application for Level C.
- The foster carer will supply their updated training passport evidencing their training and development record. Level C will be awarded if the Payment for Skills panel have evidence that the foster carer has

achieved the required level of training and experience. The requirements are detailed within the training passport.

- Fee level C is paid to the foster carer for each child in their care.
- To maintain Level C, foster carers must provide evidence in their training passport that they are continuing to develop their skills and knowledge by booking and attending further training and e-learning or evidencing that they have undertaken appropriate reading, study or gained experience in other ways. This further development will have been evidenced in their annual review report to fostering panel and quality assured by the fostering team manager
- The foster carer will evidence through their updated passport, that they have a commitment to further training beyond the mandatory courses. Evidence of further training attended will be required for progression to Level D.
- The foster carer will be notified in writing of the decision of the PFS's panel. Any appeals will be dealt with by the deputy head of service for fostering and their decision is final.

#### **Level D**

- Progression to Level D on the Payment for Skills Pathway will require minimum two years' experience at Level C.
- To be considered for level D carers must be prepared to be approved and willing to consider placements in the 0-18 age range, and children are likely to have more complex needs.
- In addition, level D carers must be prepared to support the fostering service more widely, for example buddying supporting training, interviewing staff/students, supporting with recruitment events or being involved in the committee of the Foster Care Association (FCA)
- The foster carer will be available to care for the child/children as stated at their approval, is flexible to be able to fully meet the needs of the child/ren in placement for time out of school, to attend appointments with the child or transporting to and from school, appointments and family time.
- The foster carer is expected to give at least 4 weeks written notice of ending a placement.
- If the child ends the placement by e.g., by absconding, refusing to return, the foster carer will receive up to 4 weeks fee at Level D after the child has moved from the placement. If the placement ends because of child protection concerns relating to the carer, no fee will be payable once the child has moved from the placement.
- Level D will be considered if the Foster Carers offer a permanent placement – if this placement breaks down or when the young person becomes 18 and moves on there will be an expectation that the Foster Carer will take another teenager or child with complex needs, to maintain their level D status.
- The foster carer will have completed all the mandatory training courses as detailed at Level D in the training Passport.

NB. All Mandatory training to be refreshed every 5 years and every 3 years for Paediatric First aid.

- The foster carer will have attended any additional training course identified by them or their SSW this is recorded in their passport.
- The written overview of learning within the training passport will have been completed by the foster carer and SSW.
- The foster carer will be able to evidence that they continue to update their safeguarding knowledge, and this must include internet safety. This can be achieved through reading, research or self-directed learning.

- The foster carer will evidence through their updated passport, that they have a commitment to further training beyond the mandatory courses. Evidence of further training attended will be required for progression to Level D.
- The foster carer will have attended a minimum of 4 support groups in the last 2 years and dates will be added to their training record held by Workforce Learning and Development.
- The Foster Carer will need to evidence their contribution to fostering services: Mentoring of new foster carers through participating in the buddying scheme, recruitment /publicity events, supporting training activities.
- The foster carer is expected to maintain clear, current and secure electronic records on the children in placement which have been seen and signed off by the supervising social worker. They are also expected to evidence that these records are stored securely, and that the storage reflects the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- All records pertaining to a child who has left placement to be returned to the fostering service.
- . The foster carer will have had a successful annual review and the fostering service will need to evidence how they have supported the carer to meet the Fostering National Minimum standards
- The Supervising social worker for the foster carer will attend Payment For Skills panel to present the application for Level D.
- The foster carer will supply their updated training passport evidencing their training and development record. Level D will be awarded if the Payment For Skills panel have evidence that the foster carer has achieved the required level of training and experience. The requirements are detailed within the training passport.
- Fee level D is paid to the foster carer for each child in their care.
- To maintain Level D, foster carers must provide evidence in their training passport that they are continuing to develop their skills and knowledge by booking and attending further training and e-learning or evidencing that they have undertaken appropriate reading, study or gained experience in other ways. This further development will have been evidenced in their annual review report to fostering panel and quality assured by the fostering team manager
- The foster carer will be notified in writing of the decision of the Payment For Skills panel. Any appeals will be dealt with by the deputy head of service for fostering and their decision is final.

At level A carers will receive £80 per week for each foster child in the household. This will increase by £50 at each level

Level A - £80 per child -per week

Level B - £130 per child- per week

Level C - £180 per child – per week

Level D £230 per child – per week

For carers who are receiving a payment level under the old scheme (levels 1-4) the old payment will be honoured whilst the children/young person is in their care. Carers will need to evidence to the Payment For Skills panel that they meet the requirements for the new equivalent level in their training passport. Payment For Skills panel will make an assessment that this is the correct level.

Foster carers will receive their agreed Payment For Skills level until the child/young person in their care 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. If a carer has a young person on a staying put arrangement they will be paid from the leaving care service the equivalent fee for a 16–18-year-old and will not be entitled to any additional fee level.

Respite Level: If an existing carer offer respite for another child not normally in their care, they will be paid at their existing Payment For Skills level. From the launch of this policy, foster carers offering respite care only will not be able to progress beyond level B.

## **4. Training Passport**

---

Every fostering household will have a training passport clearly outlining expectations of carers at all the levels. It is the carers responsibility to complete the passport and share with their supervising social worker who will offer advice and guidance in completing it and signing off the training on a regular basis (but at least annually).

Carer's passport will be reviewed at Payment For Skills Panel two months after carers first annual review. Thereafter the carers training record will be considered at their annual fostering review. Their training passport will then only be presented at the Payment For Skills panel should their training level need to be reviewed. This may be for progression or following concerns if requirements are not being met.

There is an expectation that carers and supervising social workers complete the overview of training in the passport for the Payment for Skills Panel members to read – no decision about progression/maintenance will be made without both the overviews of foster carers and supervising social workers.

Maintenance of training will be monitored at carers annual review

## **5. Payment for skills Panel**

---

Payment For Skills panel meets monthly - the panel members are the fostering managers and Derby City Council workforce learning and development team , fostering clerical support officer. The Deputy Head of Service for fostering chairs the meeting and minutes are taken, and a letter confirming decisions sent to foster carers following the panel.

Carers need to have their Training Support and Development standard verified prior to their first Payment For Skills panel to allow them to progress to Level A.

After carers progress to Level A supervising social workers can present their carers training passport every two years to the Payment For Skills panel if carers wish to progress to the next level and have met all the requirements. From the evidence in the training passport the panel decision will be made if the carer can progress to the next level, remain on the same level, or drop a level if training has not been maintained.

## **6. Exceptions**

---

There may be circumstances where the Payment For Skills panel will consider an application from a carer to be placed higher on the fee scheme without progressing chronologically through the various levels. When a foster carer transfers from another fostering provider they will be expected to evidence that they have acquired the necessary experience and training to warrant a higher fee level. Applications for a higher level will be considered at the Payment For Skills panel and decisions made in writing to the carers.



## **7. Short Break Carers**

---

Short Break Carers are not part of the Payment For Skills Scheme.

## **8 Parent and Child Placements**

---

For carers providing Parent and Child placements this will be outside the Payment For Skills scheme. When the placement ends carers will revert to being paid on their agreed level.



Judy Levitt

Deputy Head of Service for Fostering