

REVISED PAYMENT SCHEMES TABLES FOSTER CARERS

Payments

Medway Council approved Foster Carers will receive the following payments per week (payable every fortnight in arrears):

Age Bands	Maintenance (to meet the child's needs)	Reward (for the Foster Carer)	Total
0-4 years	£160	£120	£280
5-10 years	£180	£170	£350
11-15 years	£200	£230	£430
16+ years	£240	£230	£470

The 2019/2020 rates and age bands were as follows, with the proposed changes in column three:

Age Band	All-inclusive payment	Proposed changes Per Week
0 - 4	£250	£30 increase
5 - 8	£280	£70 increase
9 - 15	£400	*see below
16+	£430	£40 increase

*The bands for children aged 5-8 and 9-15 years have been changed under the new payment structure. We believe an age band of 9-15 years is too broad as the needs of a 9-year-old are very different to those of a 15-year-old. Having an age band of 5-10 years is categorised by the primary age, with the expected needs of a child being more stable compared to the secondary age.

We have recognised that as children prepare to enter secondary age, their needs become greater and the financial demands increase. Therefore, establishing age bands to mirror these developmental milestones and the financial impacts, will support the needs of our children more consistently.

For children aged 9 and 10 years, this does mean a decrease of £50 per week, however, when they reach 11 years this will be an increase of £30 per week compared to the current structure.

For carers currently matched with children aged 9 and 10 years, a 12-month protected transition period will be in place, meaning payment at the current rate will be made for this duration.

Determining a Child's Level of Need

A new Tiered system for determining the level of need for a child has been introduced.

Tier 1 = EXPECTED

Tier 2 = EXCEPTIONAL

There will be defined criteria for both Tiers and an assessment made regarding the appropriate Tier for the child upon receipt of the referral to the Fostering Team.

Tier 1 – payments made for children with the EXPECTED level of need for their age who are living within the care system. This is based on their lived experiences, the loss, trauma and separation they have endured and the anticipated impact these experiences have on their child development, emotional wellbeing and behaviours.

Carers will provide commitment to children / young people for a set period of time when there are competing plans or whilst a plan is developed. Children assessed as Tier 1 may present with challenging behaviours, and be experiencing some issues such as child sexual exploitation, physical/verbal aggression, school refusal, offending behaviour etc.

Tier 2 – payments made for children that exceed the expected level of need, considered to be EXCEPTIONAL needs. Carers will provide commitment to specialised placements of children / young people with the most complex needs such as profound disability or step down from Residential care.

Matching Fee

Carers matched with children who are assessed as being Tier 2 will receive an additional payment (known as a Matching Fee) of £100 per week per child. This payment is a Reward payment and is solely for the carer.

Tier 1 and Tier 2 Payments

Age Bands	Maintenance (to meet the child's needs)	Reward (for the Foster Carer)	Tier 1 Total	Tier 2 Total (Including Matching Fee)
0-4 years	£160	£120	£280	£380
5-10 years	£180	£170	£350	£450
11-15 years	£200	£230	£430	£530
16+ years	£240	£230	£470	£570

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES FOSTERING

Payment

An individualised financial package for this unique type of fostering will consist of a 3-tiered system based on the child's level of need:

Tier 3 = Severe Needs

Tier 4 = Exceptional Needs

*Defined criteria will be set out

Children whose needs are assessed as Moderate (rather than Severe or Exceptional) will meet criteria for Tier 2 of the generic fostering payment structure, as

set out in the fostering allowances section. The rates for Disabilities Fostering will be paid as below:

Level of Need	Maintenance Payment per week	Reward Payment per week
Tier 3 – Severe Needs	£240	£600
Tier 4 – Exceptional Needs	£240	£700

CONNECTED CARERS

During the assessment stage, if a child is residing with a Connected Carer, the carer will receive the Maintenance rate of the fostering fee relating to the child's age. Upon completion of a positive assessment and approval as a Connected Carer, the Reward fee will be paid alongside the Maintenance fee.

The Age Bands, Maintenance and Reward elements of the fostering fee structure that will apply to children living in Connected placements are:

Age Bands	Maintenance	Reward	Tier 1 Total	Tier 2 Total (Including Matching Fee)
0-4 years	£160	£120	£280	£380
5-10 years	£180	£170	£350	£450
11-15 years	£200	£230	£430	£530
16+ years	£240	£230	£470	£570

Connected Carers will receive the Birthday and Festival allowances at the same rate as Foster Carers for each of the children in their care.

Connected Carers will not be eligible for the Skills and Services payment.

Children living in Connected placements will receive the same element of pocket money and savings as children living with Foster Carers.

Connected Carers are not entitled to paid respite, unless this is an aspect of the child's care plan or for placement stability.