

Foster Carer Expenses

What are you entitled to?

Applicable from April 1st, 2025



The child's fostering allowance covers the costs of looking after the child. However, there are some additional costs not normally associated with being a parent. This guidance details the additional costs foster carers are entitled to claim for.

Activity	Hourly Rate of £7 can be claimed in the following circumstances:	Mileage of 45p per mile plus parking fees or public transport costs can be claimed in the following circumstances:
<p>1: School & after school activity transport</p>	<p>Transporting children to and from their education provision, school activities and school clubs is an integral part of the foster cares' role. Foster carers are therefore not usually entitled to an additional hourly rate for this work.</p> <p>However, an hourly rate can be paid when there are exceptional circumstances; AGREED IN ADVANCE by the Fostering Team Manager.</p> <p>For an hourly rate to be considered both the following must apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School is out of carer's local / catchment area • It is calculated and agreed by the professional network and agreed by the Fostering Team Manager that it will usually take more than 40 minutes to travel one way to the school. <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>	<p>The first 3 miles, each way, of the school transport cannot be claimed.</p> <p>Mileage beyond 3 miles each way (6mile round trip) can be claimed.</p> <p>If the child is using public transport the full amount can be reimbursed.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 823</p>
<p>2: Activities, clubs & hobbies</p>	<p>Providing fees and transport for children to take part in activities, clubs and hobbies outside of school is an integral part of the foster cares' role and the costs associated should always be paid for out of the child's allowance.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, where the carer, SSW and child's team manager believe there is evidence that fees and transport are more than can be reasonably met from the child's allowance a request for additional finance can be put before the Locality Resource panel for the DLD's consideration.</p>	

Activity	Hourly Rate of £7 can be claimed in the following circumstances:	Mileage of 45p per mile plus parking fees or public transport costs can be claimed in the following circumstances:
3: Contact	<p>Supporting children to have time with their family is an integral part of the foster carer's role and foster carers are therefore not usually entitled to an additional hourly rate for this work.</p> <p>However, an hourly rate is payable when the foster carer has been requested to supervise family time, with birth parents or former carers, either in their home or at a contact venue. The hourly rate can also be paid if the foster carer has been requested by the child's social worker to remain at the contact centre for the duration of the contact.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances and when AGREED IN ADVANCE by the Fostering Team Manager, an hourly rate can be paid if the distance to the contact venue is too far (over 40mins) to reasonably expect the foster carer to return home during the contact.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>	<p>Travel costs can be claimed for all contact arrangements including official sibling contact agreed at placement planning meeting or childcare review.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 823</p>
4: Travel for respite or other alternative placements	<p>NOT APPLICABLE</p>	<p>Travel costs can be claimed to take children to and from respite care or alternative placements.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 823</p>
5: Attendance at meetings	<p>NOT APPLICABLE</p> <p>Attending meetings regarding the child e.g. PEP, Stat reviews, supervisions, household reviews, parent's evenings etc. is an integral part of the fostering role and carers will therefore not be paid an additional hourly rate for this work.</p> <p>However, an hourly rate up to the cost of the daily fostering rate can be paid, in exceptional circumstances and when AGREED IN ADVANCE by the Fostering Team Manager, if the meeting is outside of the usual fostering role. For example, attending a Home Office appointment with a UASC.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>	<p>Travel costs can be claimed for attendance at all social care meetings regarding children.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>

Activity	Hourly Rate of £7 can be claimed in the following circumstances:	Mileage of 45p per mile plus parking fees or public transport costs can be claimed in the following circumstances:
6: Support Groups	NOT APPLICABLE	<p>Travel costs to Support Groups organised and facilitated by the Local Authority can be claimed.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>
7: Training	<p>NOT APPLICABLE</p> <p>Attending training is an integral part of the fostering role and carers will therefore not be paid an additional hourly rate for this work.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances e.g. when carers have been available without a placement the hourly rate can be considered by the Fostering Team Manager.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>	<p>Travel costs to attend fostering training organised by or agreed by the fostering team can be claimed.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>
8: Hospital and Specialist Health Care appointments	<p>Taking children to GP, health, therapy and hospital appointments is an integral part of the fostering role and carers will therefore not be paid an additional hourly rate for this work.</p> <p>However, an hourly rate can be paid in exceptional circumstances and when AGREED IN ADVANCE by the Fostering Team Manager if a specialist appointment or hospital stay has created a significant financial or practical impact. For example, overnight stays incurring costs of child minding for other children, taking time off paid employment etc.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>	<p>Travel cost for routine and 'normal' health appointments such as G.P., dental, optician, A & E cannot be claimed.</p> <p>Travel costs to health appointments such as therapy and 'specialist' hospital or consultant appointments can be claimed.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 823</p>
9: Attending Court	<p>The hourly rate, up to the cost of the daily fostering rate, can be claimed for attendance at court if the foster carer is giving evidence or requested by the child's social worker to attend to support the child.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>	<p>All travel costs to attend or transport a child to court can be claimed.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 823</p>

Activity	Hourly Rate of £12.50 can be claimed in the following circumstances:	Mileage of 45p per mile plus parking fees or public transport costs can be claimed in the following circumstances:
10: Ambassador work	<p>Co-facilitating training</p> <p>Supporting recruitment events</p> <p>Attending initial visits</p> <p>Participation in local authority working groups</p> <p>NB It is not expected that ambassadors will undertake more than 10 hours work each month.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>	<p>Travel costs can be claimed for all activities listed.</p>
11: Buddy Scheme	<p>Buddy's will usually be linked with applicants during their assessment and provide peer support during assessment and throughout their first year of fostering.</p> <p>It is not expected that buddies will undertake more than 25 hours of support for each buddy they are linked with.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>	<p>Travel costs can be claimed for all buddy visits undertaken.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>

Activity	Other expenses that can be claimed	
12: Adoption Introductions	<p>Introducing children to adoptive or alternative carers is an integral part of the fostering role and carers will therefore not be paid an additional hourly rate for this work.</p> <p>Introductory visits for adoptive or other placement moves can involve foster carers 'hosting' adoptive families: providing lunch / dinner etc.</p> <p>Foster carers can claim up to £7 per person, including additional children 'hosting allowance' on days that adopters are visiting during mealtimes.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>	<p>All travel costs incurred for adoption introductions can be claimed.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>
13: Children's Passports	<p>First passports</p> <p>The full cost of either an adult passport, for children aged 16 and 17 years or the cost of a first child passport for children age 15 years and under, will be reimbursed. The cost of a replacement for either, will usually be paid by the carer from the child's allowance. However the cost can be reimbursed for children who have recently joined the household. (to be considered on a case-by-case basis) Any requests for reimbursement of a replacement passport must be agreed by the child's social work manager. (budget holder)</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 846</p>	<p>Travel costs to for an emergency appointment to get a passport.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 823</p>
14: University visits	<p>NOT APPLICABLE</p> <p>If a Child in Care is visiting universities, we encourage their foster carer to be involved. Any additional financial support for this activity needs to be agreed as part of the young person's pathway plan.</p>	<p>A contribution to travel costs will be paid in negotiation with the child's social care team.</p> <p>Claimed on expenses form 823</p>

Additional Costs

15: Child day care:

Foster carers are in receipt of an allowance and fee to provide full time care for children placed. When foster carers need child day care, they should prioritise the use of their family and friends whenever possible. Any financial arrangements for this informal child day care remains between the carer and their family member or friend out of the allowance is already being paid to the foster carer.

If family or friends are not viable, foster carers are encouraged to seek support from their 'foster carer' network or use registered child minders for all child day care. Essex will pay for this child day care when the foster carer is undertaking fostering business e.g. meetings, training etc.

When using the foster carer network the **foster carer providing the day care is responsible for claiming** child care costs. The carer requesting the child care should not pay.

An hourly rate of £7 is payable for up to 8 hours of day care. (Maximum of £56)

If a registered child-minder is the only option for day care the foster carer will be responsible for paying the child minder and can claim back up to £7 an hour or the equivalent of the day rate (see above). Receipts would be required.

- **Child day care:** Travel costs can be claimed for dropping and collecting child from day care when undertaking fostering business.

Foster carers are responsible for their own/ birth children's childcare; therefore, this cannot be claimed for. If there are exceptional circumstances this should be discussed with your supervising social worker in the first instance.

- **Foster carers cannot claim expenses when their own family network provides day care.**

Any arrangements outside of this need to be agreed by the team manager.

Claimed on expenses form 846

16: Children's Activities

Any activities related to the Children in Care Council travel costs can be claimed.

All expenses for children's activities are included within the fostering allowance. If there are exceptional expenses associated with a child's hobby or activities this should be discussed at the placement planning meeting/child's review and agreed by the social worker team manager.

Claimed on expenses form 823

17: Additional clothing payments for initial placement

When a child is first placed, and they arrive with unsuitable or inadequate clothing a small additional payment can be considered by agreement with the childcare team manager this would not normally be over £100.

School Uniform

When child is first placed and they immediately need a new school uniform or if the child is having to change schools and allowance is already spent on previous school uniform, additional money can be considered by agreement with the Child Care Team Manager.

Claimed on expenses form 823

18: Hepatitis B Vaccination

Some children requiring fostering may have been at increased risk of acquiring hepatitis B infection. Carers who accept children as emergency placements should be aware of the risks and how they can minimise the risks of transmission of all blood-borne virus infections. All carers who receive emergency placements or accept a child who is known, or their family are known to have Hepatitis B should consider immunisation against hepatitis B. The cost of this will be reimbursed for all family members of the fostering household living in the household.

Claimed on expenses form 846