

APPENDIX 1 - Fostering Allowances Survey Results

There were 34 responses in total to the survey.
Valid percentages are based on the number of people that responded to the question.

Q1.Are you:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
A Foster Carer	33	97	97
Central Bedfordshire resident	1	3	3
Total	34	100	100

Q2.If you are a Foster Carer, how long have you been in this role?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Less than 1 year	8	24	25
1-2 years	12	35	38
3-5 years	4	12	13
6-10 years	1	3	3
Over 10 years	7	21	22
Total	32	94	100
Missing	2	6	
Total	34	100	

Q3.If you are a Foster Carer, how happy or unhappy are you with the way Foster Carer allowances are currently set and reviewed?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Very happy	3	9	9
Happy	15	44	47
Unhappy	7	21	22
Very unhappy	3	9	9
Don't know/ No opinion	4	12	13
Total	32	94	100
Missing	2	6	
Total	34	100	

Q3a.If you are unhappy with the way the current rates are set please say why.

Highly trained and skilled foster carers are not being rewarded	
I do not think current allowances reflect the skills and commitment to be a foster carer. They are not 'Professional' allowances.	
In no way compensates you for the amount of time/effort you put into fostering. A better rate would mean better retention as foster carers ultimately lowering recruitment costs.	
Individual circumstances are not taken into consideration. Previous allowances are not payable now and I am out of pocket and subsidise the council!	
There is very little flexibility with the allowance and I believe it does not take an individual child's need or the fostering family	
They do not cover the true cost of a family experience for children especially if we have to transport to school and extra playgroup sessions.	
Too much expected for us to do and end up paying out of your own pocket. Nobody does it to make money, but nobody wants to be worse off either. e.g. holidays where the extra money come from? I don't know a weeks holiday for £125 - if there is I'd like to know.	
We feel that children with drug or alcohol withdrawal should be treated the same as those under the disability allowance.	
With the cost of food and petrol and no increase in allowance for 2 years it does not look as though the council is committed.	

Q4.Three options have been identified for setting Foster Carer allowances in the future. Please indicate your most preferred method.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Option 1: Continue with the current system based on allowances published annually by the Fostering Network recommended rates, with the option of a market rate supplement	21	62	64
Option 3: Consider a change of the current allowance system in favour of a tiered payments system which rewards the experience, training and skills of Foster Carers.	12	35	36
Total	33	97	100
Missing	1	3	
Total	34	100	

Note: No Foster Carers voted for Option 2

Q5.How far do you agree or disagree with the criteria for tier 1?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	3	25
Agree	8	67
Disagree	1	8
Total	12	100

Q5a.If you disagree, please say why.

I believe this should again be based on the skills of the fostering family and the needs of each individual child. I have met first time carers with twice the skills of long term carers.

Q6.How far do you agree or disagree with the criteria for tier 2?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	3	25
Agree	9	75
Total	12	100

Q7.How far do you agree or disagree with the criteria for tier 3?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	6	50
Agree	5	42
Disagree	1	8
Total	12	100

Q7a.If you disagree, please say why.

Could joint carers pool learning activities towards their total? Could there be a one off reward if you have a child in placement for more than 6months - say M & S vouchers or similar?

Q8. If a tiered payments system was adopted for setting allowances, what support, if any, do you think you would need with this approach?

	Frequency	Percent
E- learning or distance learning	4	33
Formal training	3	25
External training	3	25
Support with meeting CWDC standards	2	17
Attending support groups	2	17
One:One learning activity with social worker	2	17
Other	2	17

Q8a.Other specified

Already reached this criteria

I have completed all training with my husband and update as needed

Q9.How important is the level of allowance you receive in your decision to be a Foster Carer?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Very important	9	26	27
Important	19	56	58
Not very important	4	12	12
Not important at all	1	3	3
Total	33	97	100
Missing	1	3	
Total	34	100	

Q10. Do you have any other comments about Foster Carer allowances?

Allowances should not be set by local council but nationally with local allowances set on top.
Allowances are not realistic in terms of market rates. Not motivating to attract new foster carers. Rates, financially and perceptually still stuck in the 80's. Not up to date with current workforce.
As a single carer on pension credit I cannot afford to be out of pocket. I love fostering but for instance I live in a large house where foster children are not eligible for housing benefit so I am 'over-housed' and have to pay £410 each month and very large bills and the allowance barely covers my outgoings and disregards children!
Decent allowance for experienced foster carers - value our experience
Everyone should get the same we are all equal. We have to have enough money for the child's expenses. We should not be out of pocket for looking after someone else's child.
Fostering allowances should be more transparent and consistent. The rate is so poor, I am surprised any foster carers continue. You are relying on people's good nature. A structured professional wage would attract and retain professional foster carers.
Fostering has a major impact on the entire family. When it causes further financial difficulties it can put off families who could otherwise offer a great chance to a child in need.
How will this affect the legal agreement re: the 3 special guardianships we have with the department
I believe that full time foster carers should not be 'out of pocket' they should be rewarded for the excellent work they do.
I feel that allowances need to reflect the real cost of a LAC. All bills are rising rapidly and this needs to be reflected in the fostering allowances. This is the only way that you can attract and retain good carers.
I spend most of the allowance on the children so obviously the money is important. I am 'Friends and Family's' and 75 years old
I think we should have allowances and then a payment for the hard work we put in and for the extras that aren't catered for.
It is disappointing that you have assumed that if I favour Option 1, that I have no opinion on tiered payments. This questionnaire is flawed and should be resubmitted to all carers. How are the responses of various groups weighted?
It thought the allowance was to help look after the child - food, clothes, outings etc. None of the allowance states it is a payment
Need to revise the allowance paid for holidays as current amount discriminates against looked after children
The current system does not cover the true cost of a full family experience for young people in a placement. If it is cut it makes recruitment and retention of carers harder, if not impossible!
The vast majority of foster carers do not do the role for the allowances, however, I am convinced that many of the carers would not be able to do the role if it were not for the allowances they receive
There is no mention of it in the survey but a premium as is now in place for looking after a disabled child should remain.
They are okay but need to be in line with the job, which can be very difficult and there is quite considerable expense incurred.

Q11. Are you male or female?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Female	26	76	79
Male	7	21	21
Total	33	97	100
Missing	1	3	
Total	34	100	

Q12. What is your age?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
18-29 yrs	1	3	3
30-44 yrs	11	32	32
45-59 yrs	17	50	50
60-64 yrs	2	6	6
65-74 yrs	2	6	6
75+	1	3	3
Total	34	100	100

Q13. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	33	97	97
Yes	1	3	3
Total	34	100	100

Q14. To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
White British	28	82	85
Black or Black British	3	9	9
Other	2	6	6
Total	33	97	100
Missing	1	3	
Total	34	100	

Q14a. Other ethnicity specified

English
white/Irish

Town

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Bedford	11	32	39
Cambridgeshire	2	6	7
Flitwick	2	6	7
Leighton Buzzard	2	6	7
Ampthill	1	3	4
Biggleswade	1	3	4
Dunstable	1	3	4
Hatch	1	3	4
Houghton Conquest	1	3	4
London	1	3	4
Lower Stondon	1	3	4
Luton	1	3	4
Maulden	1	3	4
Rushden	1	3	4
Westoning	1	3	4
Total	28	82	100
Missing	6	18	
Total	34	100	