

Essex County Council FOSTERING FEES

PAID PER CHILD April 1st 2025 to March 31st 2026

£2000 Loyalty Bonus

All carers* who provided foster care or supported lodgings for a child in 2024 will receive a **£2000 loyalty bonus (payment will be made in the new financial year)**

**Carers who did not provide any care in 2024 or who resigned/ deregistered or who have indicated their intention to resign prior to 13rd Feb 2025 will not receive the loyalty bonus.*

All foster carers and supported lodgings carers who are registered in 2025 or who resume caring in 2025 following a break in 2024 will be entitled to a **£2000 welcome bonus**

payable following a qualifying period after registration during 2025.

2025 – 2026 Paid per child per week

Mainstream fostering fees

- £255 + allowance for children 0-10 years
- £315 + allowance for children 11-18 years

Supported Lodging fees

- £315 + (+ the young person receives an allowance)

Narrow fostering fee

- £65 + allowance (0-18 years)

Specialist fostering fees

- £315 + allowance for children 0-10 years with **highly complex needs** (details below)
- £440 + allowance for children who; '**step down**' from residential, or unregistered to '**break the cycle**' of multiple moves, or children who require a '**solo**' placement (details below)
- £440 + allowance (0-18) for placement of children with diagnosed disabilities **and** associated highly complex needs who are **not allocated** with the children with disabilities teams (details below)
- £640 + allowance (0-18) for placements of children with diagnosed disabilities who are allocated to the **Children and Young People with Disabilities** (CYPD) teams, or it is agreed that they meet the threshold for allocation to the children with disabilities team.
- £1270 + allowance (0-18) for placements of children allocated with the **Children and Young people with Disabilities** teams who require the carers to provide either **2 to 1 care or waking night care**
- £14.63 per hour (between 7am and 7pm when caring for a child) and £115 overnight rate for **CYPD short breaks**
- £640 fee for **Parent & Child Placements** + allowance x 2 for both parent and child if under 18 (if parent is over 18 the allowance is negotiated dependent upon the parents' benefit entitlement)

Specialist schemes

- £640 + £115 overnight rate **Fee Paid Short Breaks Scheme - 5 nights**
- £510 + £115 overnight rate **Fee Paid Short Breaks Scheme - 4 nights**
- £385 + £115 overnight rate **Fee Paid Short Breaks Scheme - 3 nights**
- £290 per week duty payment + allowance & fee (when a child is placed) for being on the **PACE Bed Scheme** rota
- £410 per week duty payment + allowance & fee (when a child is placed) for being on the **Emergency Bed Scheme** rota
- £850 + allowance **Intensive fostering scheme** (tbc still in development)

Staying Put Fees

- Carers can receive a 'Staying Put' fee for young people post 18 usually equivalent to the fee they were receiving prior to the young person's 18th Birthday to a maximum of £315.
- There is a limit on the number of Staying Put fees that will be paid: The total number of fees paid is capped at the maximum number of foster placements for which the carer is approved 'plus one' staying put arrangement.

Essex County Council FOSTERING FEES

PAID PER CHILD April 1st 2025 to March 31st 2026

Allowances for children increased on 1st April 2025 by 2.5%
(consumer price index @ 31st Dec 2024)

Essex Allowances paid per child per week		<i>Essex allowances remain above the Government recommended Allowances 2025 – 2026 (Rest of England)</i>	
Aged 0-2 years	£193.13	Age 0 to 2	£170
Aged 3-4 years	£193.13	Age 3 to 4	£176
Aged 5-10 years	£220.08	Age 5 to 10	£194
Aged 11-15 years	£273.77	Age 11 to 15	£220
Aged 16+ years	£291.34	Age 16 to 17	£258

Fees and allowances entitlement: THE DETAILS

MAINSTREAM FOSTERING FEE:

One **mainstream fee** is paid per child to each fostering household regardless of whether this is a single person or a couple. The mainstream fee is paid when the household provides (or has provided) a range of tasks for the fostering service. For example, providing placements to children with a wide age range, providing placements for children with wide ranging needs, providing placements to children with unknown needs, providing placements to children from a range of different backgrounds, offering a range or combination of placement options. For example, offering respite placements as well as short term or long term, or offering emergency placements as well as respite placements.

The fee is paid whilst a child is in placement and can be paid for up to 28 nights after a child has left if there are no other children in placement and the carer is available to take a new child.

NARROW FOSTERING FEE:

One **narrow fee** per child is paid to each fostering household regardless of whether this is a single person or a couple. The Narrow fee is paid when the household's range of tasks provided to the fostering service is limited and therefore their approval is narrow. For example, carers registered for planned placements of babies aged 0-2 years only; carers registered for named children only or where the carer's registration excludes children from a wide range of specific need/behaviour.

ALLOWANCE:

The **child's allowance** is paid to each fostering household whilst the child is in placement.

4 WEEKS ADDITIONAL FOSTERING ALLOWANCE:

1 week's additional allowance per child is paid at Christmas.

1 week's additional allowance per child is paid before their birthday.

2 week's additional allowance per child is paid in July to contribute to the cost of looking after a child during the 6 weeks summer holiday.

RESPITE CARE:

Foster carers who provide children respite care are paid the child's allowance and the fee per child on a pro rata basis.

SPECIALIST FEES:

The **£315 'Specialist fee'** for children aged 0-10 can be paid when:

1. When a child requires ongoing and high frequency medical intervention / has complex health care needs / requires regular hospitalisation.
2. When an infant is diagnosed by health professionals as withdrawing from drugs or considered to have foetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Essex County Council FOSTERING FEES

PAID PER CHILD April 1st 2025 to March 31st 2026

3. When it is agreed by the network that a child is unable to attend mainstream pre-school, nursery or school due to the complexities of their behaviours.
4. When a child requires a significant level of assistance over and above normal level of functioning with their continence needs.
5. When a child requires additional assistance or has feeding difficulties over and above age-related eating competencies which are a result of their physical or psychological needs.
6. When a child has hearing loss or is registered partially sighted or blind, requiring additional supervision or support, (NB this fee will apply if there are no associated complex behaviours)
7. When a child has consistent and ongoing needs, above those of a child of a similar age, related to poor sleeping patterns / frequently waking up during the night.
8. When a child exhibits consistent and ongoing signs of trauma such as self-harming or aggression towards others resulting in injury or distress to themselves or others in the household.
9. When a child has significantly reduced awareness, below that expected of a child of a similar age, of external dangers and this requires highly / extra vigilant adult support to enable them to access the environment.
10. When a child's needs and behaviours significantly impact on their ability to interact with peers and maintain peer relationships requiring a high level of adult support/ supervision to enable and encourage interaction with peers.

All requests for the specialist £315 are made through the Locality Resource Panel. If agreed, it is paid for the duration of the placement or until the child is 11 and is not subject to review. Apart from if the additional fee is given due to a child withdrawing from drugs at birth. This will be subject to review and the additional will payment will cease when the child is no longer showing symptoms or behaviours associated with drug withdrawal

The £440 'Specialist fee' can be paid when:

1. Step down:

A child, any age has been matched by the Therapeutic Fostering Team and stepped down from residential care or has been matched by the TFT following multiple placement breakdowns due to complex behaviours.

*£440 to be paid for any child matched by TFT for the duration of the placement with **no requirement for agreement at Locality Resource Panel** and with no review / withdrawal when the carer has supported positive change in the child's behaviour. (Other 'intensive support' work with TFT does not qualify for this specialist fee)*

2. Solo placement:

A child aged 5+ being matched or already in placement is considered by the child's network and with agreement from the childcare Service Manager as needing a 'solo' placement due to their emotional/ behavioural needs. This should be applied based on the child's assessed needs and not dependent upon the number of placements a foster carer is registered for.

£440 to be paid following agreement at Locality Resource Panel and reviewed 6-monthly. If the child is assessed as no longer requiring a 'solo' placement enabling the Foster Carer to take additional children, the £440 Specialist Fee will cease.

3. When foster carer needs to be available to care for the child during school hours

A child 11+, being matched or already in placement, has complex behaviours / needs which will require the foster carer to remain available for an indefinite period (not at alternative work) during usual school hours including.

- a child who persistently does not attend school and is unlikely to return to full time attendance.
- a child who is frequently excluded from school, and is unlikely to return to undisrupted attendance.

Essex County Council FOSTERING FEES

PAID PER CHILD April 1st 2025 to March 31st 2026

- a child who has frequent missing episodes and these are likely to remain ongoing for an indefinite period.
- a child who has high numbers of ongoing appointments (medical / mental health/YOS)

£440 to be paid following agreement at Locality Resource Panel for the duration of the placement, not be subject to review / withdrawal when the carer has supported positive change in the child's behaviour.

4. **Placements of a child diagnosed with a disability:**

A child, any age, placed has a diagnosed disability **and** has associated highly complex needs and or behaviours but is **not allocated within the CYPD team**.

£440 to be paid following agreement at Locality Resource Panel for the duration of the placement, not be subject to review / withdrawal.

5. **Placement of a child with diagnosed disability and who is allocated to the CYPD team:**

Not all children allocated to the CYPD team have significant disabilities, for example a sibling of a child with significant disabilities may be allocated to the team despite their needs not meeting the usual CYPD threshold. Cares for these siblings will not receive the enhanced £640 fee.

PARENT & CHILD:

Foster carers can be registered and trained to offer parent & child placements which are often, but not always, to enable a parenting assessment to be undertaken whilst ensuring a safe environment for the child. These can be complex situations as sometimes both the parent and child will be 'looked after', on other occasions only the child is 'looked after' and occasionally only the parent is 'looked after'.

Whatever the legal status or age of the parent & child, foster cares will receive a fee of £640 for the parent and child together.

If both parent and child are under 18, irrespective of whether they are 'looked after' or not, the foster carer will receive the appropriate age-related allowance for both parent and child.

If the parent is over 18, they will be entitled to benefits and therefore the allowance paid to the foster carer will consider the contribution the parent should make to the carer from their benefit entitlement.

SPECIALIST SCHEMES:

CWD Short breaks scheme:

Short breaks give birth families and foster carers caring for children with disabilities who may have challenging behaviour or complex medical needs, a break from their full-time caring role.

Foster carers who provide short breaks for children with disabilities receive:

Fee	£640 per week (when available for 5 days)
	£510 per week (when available for 4 days)
	£385 per week (when available for 3 days)
Day rate	£14.63 per hour (between 7am and 7pm when caring for a child)
Overnight rate	£115

Emergency Bed Scheme:

Foster carers who agree to be on a duty rota and take children and young people out of hours from our Emergency Duty Service or who take children to avoid them remaining in Police custody receive:

Fee	£410 per week for being on duty
	Fee & Child's Allowance - paid pro rata for any child/ren placed

PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) Bed Scheme:

Foster carers who take children to avoid them remaining in police custody overnight received:

Fee	£290 per week for being on duty
	Fee & Child's Allowance - paid pro rata for any child/ren placed

Intensive Fostering Scheme: (in development)

This new pilot will be launched in 2025 to provide foster care for children who have been placed in unregistered arrangements. The carers will work with other professionals to provide wraparound support

Essex County Council FOSTERING FEES

PAID PER CHILD April 1st 2025 to March 31st 2026

to the child enabling them to remain in a foster home. The (proposed) £850 fee recognises the skill required by the carer and is equivalent to carers who provide us with Emergency Bed cover (duty payment of £410 + enhanced 'step down' fee of £440)

NARROW FEE:

Carers can move from the 'narrow' fee to a 'mainstream' fee if:

- They are assessed by a new or updated mainstream fostering assessment **and** their registration indicates that they have potential and the willingness to expand their offer beyond the named child/ren or the narrow age range for which they are approved. *(any change in registration to be agreed by ADM following Fostering Panel)*
- They are providing a high standard of care, engage with learning and professional development and support the wider service, in line with mainstream approved carers and national minimum standards, for the child/ren for whom they have been narrowly approved who have been assessed by the fostering MHCs or clinical leads, CAMHS or other health professionals as presenting with complex needs/behaviours *(to be agreed at Locality Resource Panel)*

EXPENSES:

In addition to fees and allowances foster carers are entitled to claim expenses including; travel for meetings about the child, out of catchment school mileage, fostering training events mileage, an hourly rate for various additional roles etc. We also pay costs of specialist equipment related to the child's needs.

Generous Tax-free earnings thresholds and tax relief apply to fostering allowances.

RETAINER PAYMENTS:

A £65 per week, per child, retainer payment may be paid to a foster carer prior to the placement being made when:

1. They have been matched with a child who is stepping down from residential or transferring from an IFA carer.
2. They are matched with a child pending a court decision
3. They are matched with a child pending their discharge from hospital
4. They are matched with 0 secure placements for a sibling group

FEE DURING BREAKS FROM FOSTERING:

Foster Carers caring for children full time (i.e. long term or short term) are entitled to have up to 28 nights 'carer break' per year when they have a break from **all** children placed with them. They will be paid a single fee for this period. If there is more than one child in placement prior to the carer break, the highest fee will be paid.

FEE WHEN CHILDREN LEAVE PLACEMENTS:

If, because of the foster carer being unwell, all children placed full time need to move, a single fee will be payable for a period of up to 28 nights from that date. If there is more than one child in placement, prior to the illness, the highest fee will be paid.

Should there be a concern raised about a foster carer or a member of their household which requires a safeguarding or standards of care investigation, during which **ECC decide to remove the child/ren** in their care, a single fee will be payable usually for a maximum of 4 months. If there is more than one child in placement at this time, the highest fee will be paid. In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Quadrant Director for Local Delivery, this payment could be extended by a further 2 months

NB

Essex cannot guarantee that you will always have a child in placement. It is therefore important that foster carers can manage financially between placements