

FOI RESPONSE

- 1. Are former kinship foster carers entitled to any fee's and allowances for a child they get an SGO for and how much?**

Former kinship foster carers are entitled to the same kinship fostering allowance that they were receiving prior to the granting of the SGO, for 2 years post the making of the SGO.

- 2. How long are these allowances and fee's paid for?**

For 2 years post SGO, after which they will be subject to a means tested financial assessment for the SG allowance. This would then be re-assessed annually.

- 3. If there are deductions made please inform me how much, what for and how long for.**

Child benefit and child tax credit are deducted from the SG allowance, whatever the rate is. This also depends on how many children SG's have in their care as child benefit and child tax credit is paid per child.

- 4. Under what criteria can any extra funding be paid on top of these allowances and fee's?**

Only in exceptional circumstances where the SW/TM has assessed there to be additional needs in relation to the child/ren and it is approved by the HOS

- 5. Do the the LA have policies on information for kinship carers and SG's and If these policies are requested are the LA obliged to provide them?**

Yes, there is an SG policy which can be provided when requested.

- 6. What is the complaints procedure and how long should the LA take to deal with complaints?**

Please see complaints procedure details in the link below;

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/your-council/contact-council/complaints/barnet-childrens-social-care-complaints-process>

As part of the special guardianship assessment process, a tailored SG support plan is devised. This support plan incorporates the support needs of the family relating to contact, life story, finance and training. Support plans are focused on the specific needs of each family and are submitted to the Family court for ratification prior to the SG order being granted.

- 7. What other support should be offered to kinship foster carers?**

Kinship foster carers have access to training, have an allocated supervising social worker and access to support groups in exactly the same way as Barnet foster carers.

- 8. If the LA make a financial agreement in writing and then go back on this agreement what are the policies on this?**

Special Guardian financial agreements are reviewed annually and this is stated in the Special Guardianship support plans.

9. What method does Barnet council use to assess special guardians for financial support. Please provide me with what evidence can be requested from the SG by the LA as well.

Model based on DfE means test model.

Some receive discretionary allowances based on the need of a child.

10. What is the maximum payment for a child.

- a) Pre school age
- b) Primary school age
- c) Secondary school age
- d) Over 16

Age From	Age To	Post 01/05/2017 maintenance	Less Child Benefit	Max allowance
0	2	149	13.7	130.3
3	5	152	13.7	133.3
6	10	171	13.7	151.3
11	15	193	13.7	173.3
16	17	226	13.7	205.3

11. What is the criteria to qualify for a maximum payment for a child?

For new special guardians, the current rates are based on the 2017-18 London minimum maintenance rate. For pre 01/05/2017 special guardians, the rates based on LBBs old fostering maintenance rate

Former foster carers receive the full allowance (fee and maintenance) with no deduction for the first two years as a minimum.

12. Is the maximum payment based on recommended foster care rates?

Yes it is based in the fostering maintenance rate.

13. How long is the fostering fee and SG allowance paid for and at what rates?

SG allowance is paid until the child is 18 however it is reviewed on an annual basis to determine whether the carers continue to meet the threshold for an allowance each year. This allowance is subject to change following the annual reviews, taking into account the family's up to date financial circumstances. The fostering fee is paid for the duration of placement for children in care or for 2 years after the SGO is granted.

14. Are special guardians entitled to support with childcare fee's?

Yes, in some cases where it has been assessed as a specific need. If it is not assessed as a specific need at the point the assessment and support plan are concluded, then this is not support that is ordinarily provided by the Carer Support Team.

15. If the LA provide funding for supervised contact in a contact centre, does this need to be provided under a CIN plan or can this be done without a plan as part of the SG support plan instead?

This is usually managed under a CIN plan or Supervision Order. Whilst the Carer Support Team support Special Guardians in navigating contact, including managing the risks, they do not provide supervised contact. Some support cases are transferred over to the Carer Support Team with supervised contact already agreed, funded and arranged.

16. Please tell me the threshold/criteria for a child to be put under a CIN plan.

- a. They are unlikely to achieve or maintain or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services from the LA.
- b. Their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired without the provision of services from the LA.
- c. They have a disability.

17. How often are policies updated? (Please provide a date for the most recent and the next update if possible)

Barnet's Special Guardian Policy was updated in November 2019 and is reviewed annually.