



**Sandwell**  
Children's Trust

Financial Information  
for Foster Carers  
Considering a Special  
Guardianship Order

# Special Guardianship Order

Sandwell Children's Trust provide financial support to Foster Carers who are caring for children identified to move to Special Guardianship as part of the 'Exceptional Payments' offer. This offer is available to Foster Carers where Sandwell Children's Trust support the application.

Foster Carers include Sandwell Children's Trust foster carers, both mainstream and connected persons, and carers from Independent Fostering Agencies.

Where a Special Guardianship Order is deemed to be in the best interests of the child and the Foster Carers, Sandwell Children's Trust is committed to assisting and resolving any practical and financial barriers that may create a disincentive for foster carers to take on a Special Guardianship Order.

The allowance can only be considered when all the following criteria are met:

**A** The child is placed with the foster carers

**B** It has been agreed that it is in the best interests of the child to remain permanently with that carer.

**C** The agreement to the Exceptional Payment arrangement is provided in writing by Sandwell Children's Trust prior to the Special Guardianship Order (a letter will be provided to the foster carer).



# Special Guardianship Allowance

Foster carers who become Special Guardians will receive a Special Guardianship allowance from Sandwell Children's Trust equivalent to their current payments of age-related fostering allowances and fees until the child is 18 years old, less any duplicate payments that are made through child benefit and tax credits as a result of the Order (Special Guardianship Regulation 13)

Financial support paid under Special Guardian Regulations cannot duplicate any other payment available to the Special Guardian or prospective special guardian.

In determining the amount of any financial support, Sandwell Children's Trust must take account of any other grant, benefit, allowance or resource which is available to the person in respect of his needs as a result of becoming a Special Guardian of the child e.g. the payment will be minus child related benefits/child benefit/tax credits or any other equivalent child related payments that Central or Local Government may introduce in the future.



The Special Guardianship support including financial support must be reviewed at least once a year through an annual review of the Special Guardians' and child's circumstances to determine the benefits/resources that the Special Guardian is receiving in respect of the child's needs as a result of becoming a Special Guardian for the child; that the child remains living with the Special Guardian and that they remain living at the same address. The maintenance rate payable will be reviewed and amended, if there has been a change to Sandwell Children's Trust fostering maintenance level.

Sandwell Children's Trust **will** undertake a review if it becomes aware that there has been a relevant change in the circumstances of the person receiving support.

**As part of any review any retrospective claim for financial support may only be backdated up to a maximum period of 12 weeks.**

Where the 'Exceptional Payment' is being paid and in accordance with the Special Guardianship Regulations, the Local Authority will continue to pay former foster carers and connected carers until the end of the child's formal education, (after their 18th birthday) if the course started prior to their 18th birthday.

It is the responsibility of the holder of the Order to notify Sandwell Children's Trust in writing 3 months before the child's 18th birthday that they intend to remain in full-time education or training, so that a continuation of payments can be considered up until the end of the course (this excludes higher education). Without such a notification, the payments will cease when the young person becomes 18 years of age and cannot recommence.

**Sandwell Children's Trust**

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