

Essex County Council
PO Box 11, County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1LX



Ms Avril Williams
request-79575-5977259c@whatdotheyknow.com

Our Ref: ECC-012905-11
Date: 29 July 2011

Dear Ms Williams

Your Freedom of Information Request:

I am pleased to enclose the following information in response to your recent Freedom of Information request. You requested:

A/ Please can you quantify your Council's expenditure during the financial year 2010-2011 on EACH of the following items, (i.e SEPARATELY). Please include Payments made via Agencies, as well as Payments made direct, but do NOT include Agency Fees.

1. Foster Child Maintenance, Holiday, Birthday, Christmas, Initial Clothing, School Uniform, Education/Activities, Disability, Cultural, Dietary, Life Story Book, Hospital Gift, Additional Heating, Exceptional Wear and Tear, and all other Allowances paid by your particular Council

Please see attachment 1.

2. Foster Parent and Supported Lodging Provider Fees, (various aliases), Enhancements, Bonuses, Disturbance Allowances and all other Allowances paid by your particular Council.

Supported lodgings provider fees are comprised of two elements rent utilities element and support element. All supported lodgings fees are on a 3 tier system based on young person's level of need, level of support, provider expertise and training. Low support packages - £137 per week, Medium support package - £190 per week and high support package £250 per week. Supported lodgings mother and baby placements costs £370 per week. No additional allowances are paid to the provider. For fostering information, please see attachment 1.

3. Grants to Foster Parents and Supported Lodging Providers for Furniture, Equipment, House Extensions, Bigger Cars, etc.

No grants are paid to supported lodgings providers. For fostering information, please see attachment 1.

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4. Foster Parent and Supported Lodging Provider Expenses, eg, Mileage, Public Transport Fares, Babysitters, Education Course/Exam Fees, Telephone Costs, Computer, Software and Internet Costs, Entertaining Foster Children's Family and Friends, Prospective Adoptive Parents etc.

We do not pay supported lodgings providers' expenses.

For fostering financial information, please see attachment 1. Please note that Essex County Council pay a fostering fee and allowance and do not differentiate payments therefore for the following –babysitters, Education /course fees, telephone costs, Computer software and internet costs, entertaining foster carers family and friends - the fostering allowance is an inclusive payment which does not separate cultural, dietary, life story book, hospital gift, additional heating, exceptional wear and tear.)

B/ How many Foster Parent and Support Lodging Provider households were involved?

We currently have a total of 657 foster carers, and 89 supported lodgings providers.

C/ What percentage of their Incomes does your Council expect over 16 year old Foster Children to give Foster Parents and Supported Lodging Providers towards their Board and Lodge, when -

1. They are in receipt of Job Seeker's Allowance

Young people in foster care are not entitled to Job Seekers Allowance – they receive a lower personal allowance from the Local Authority and are expected to use this for personal items, toiletries etc. They do not pay anything towards their board or lodgings. Young people who live in supported lodgings are entitled to a higher rate personal allowance which is the equivalent of Job Seekers Allowance /Income Support and they are not expected to pay anything towards their board or lodgings.

2. They are in paid employment.

They are not expected to pay anything towards board or lodgings.

D/ At what age must Foster Children under your Council's jurisdiction take full financial responsibility for their own upkeep because the Care Order has expired and the Council no longer contributes to their Maintenance? 18? Or older?

At 18 when the Care Order has expired.

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Please contact me if you would like further advice or assistance about your request or your right to access information held by Essex County Council.

If you are not satisfied with my response to your request, please let me know. If I am unable to resolve the issue immediately, I will explain our complaints procedure. If, after following our complaints procedure, you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to ask the Information Commissioner to review our decision. You can contact him at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, telephone 01625 545700.

Yours sincerely

Lauri Almond

Information Governance Officer
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Essex County Council
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