

Swindon Borough Council Overpayment of Fostering Allowances and Fees Policy

The Department will make every effort to ensure overpayments of fees or allowances do not occur. However, the foster carer has an individual responsibility to check all payment information received and to contact Carer Payments immediately if an overpayment does occur. In the event of an overpayment, the Department will seek to recover the full amount.

Where significant overpayments are identified (overpayments more than an 8 week period) these will be notified by the Carer Payments Team / Finance to the Fostering Manager. The Fostering Manager will liaise with the ATM/Supervising Social Worker concerned on arrangements for recovery of the full amount. The Supervising Social Worker will contact the foster carer to discuss the over payment.

Prompt arrangements for repayment should be formally agreed as soon as possible. A minimum of 25% of the carer's current weekly payments will be deducted to recover any overpayments. Agreement to overpayment arrangements is included in the signed Foster Carer Agreement document following carer approval.

If the foster carer does not have any current placements then the supervising social worker and the Fostering Manager should agree the amount payable per week to recover the over payment depending on the carer's individual circumstances. The repayments arrangements should be discussed with the foster carer and confirmed in writing. All correspondence should be contained within the foster care's file.

The Fostering Manager should monitor these repayments on a monthly basis and liaise with business support who will be responsible for flagging if the over payment has not been recovered within the agreed timescales.

Foster carers should discuss any problems with payments, or recovery of overpayments with their supervising social worker.

If the over payment is not recovered and the foster carer refuses to make payments (if no child is in placement) then the Fostering Manager should contact the Council Debt Recovery Section to ensure that appropriate action is taken. The foster carer should be notified in writing of this action.

If the foster carer is no longer an approved carer for Swindon Borough Council then they will initially be written to by the Business Support Team with a request for payment. If no communication is received within 14 days the carers will be written to a second time informing them that the matter has been passed to the Council's Debt Recovery Section.