



**Claire Coutinho MP**

Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe)

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Dear Colleagues,

As Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children, Families and Wellbeing, it is one of my greatest priorities to ensure that children and young people who are unable to live with their own families have the best possible experiences, opportunities and outcomes. I have high ambitions for these children and young people, and you will have seen the Government strategy ‘Stable Homes, Built on Love’ which sets out a package of reforms to children’s social care to ensure it supports children and families to achieve their ambitions.

With almost three quarters of looked after children in foster care, it remains vital that foster carers receive the training, recognition and support they need to look after the children in their care. This includes financial support.

The Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards, issued by the Secretary of State under the Care Standards Act 2000, set out the expectations that are placed on foster parents and their fostering service providers. This includes the expectation that foster parents should not be financially disadvantaged because of their fostering role. We expect all foster parents to receive at least the weekly National Minimum Allowance (NMA), in addition to any agreed expenses to cover the full cost of caring for each child placed with them (standard 28).

The NMA is routinely uplifted each year, taking into account changes in inflation and what is affordable for local government. I am writing to inform you that we have uplifted the NMA for this financial year by 12.43%, and the figures are shown in the table below.

<b>Weekly NMA</b>	<b>Age 0 to 2</b>	<b>Age 3 to 4</b>	<b>Age 5 to 10</b>	<b>Age 11 to 15</b>	<b>Age 16 to 17</b>
<b>London</b>	£179	£182	£203	£232	£270
<b>South East</b>	£171	£177	£195	£223	£260
<b>Rest of England</b>	£154	£159	£175	£199	£233

Funding for this uplift is provided through the Local Government Finance Settlement. The provisional local government finance settlement makes available £59.5 billion in Core Spending Power (CSP) to local authorities in England in 2023/24, an increase of up to £5 billion on 2022/23. This is an increase in local authority funding for 2023/24 of 9% in cash

terms. This includes £3.85 billion distributed via the Social Care Grant for adult and children's social care in 2023/24. The majority of the funding provided through the settlement is un-ringfenced in recognition of local authorities being best placed to understand local priorities.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Coutinho', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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