



Council Tax Support for Foster Carers in Wales Briefing

September 2026

Summary

As part of our #CostOfFostering campaign, The Fostering Network is calling for a more consistent approach to council tax support for foster carers across Wales.

Foster carers tell us that council tax support is about more than financial assistance. It is a visible way of recognising the essential role foster carers have in providing stable, loving homes for children and young people 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Support currently varies considerably across Wales. Half of Welsh local authorities (11 of 22) offer some form of council tax discount or exemption for foster carers, with five (22.7%) offering a full or up to 100% council tax discount, and a further five (22.7%) offering up to 50% discount. We do not know how many IFAS provide a discount or exemption across Wales, but we are aware some, for example TACT does.

Why council tax support matters

Across Wales, local authorities are increasingly introducing council tax reductions and exemptions for foster carers as part of recruitment and retention strategies. However, provision remains inconsistent, creating significant differences in the support available to foster carers depending on where they live.

Foster carers consistently tell us that council tax support is about recognition as well as financial support. As more local authorities in Wales introduce discounts and exemptions, there is an opportunity to consider whether a more consistent approach should be available to foster carers across Wales.

Council tax support is not a solution to all the challenges facing foster care, but it is one practical way of valuing foster carers.

Recruitment and retention

Recent [Welsh Government statistics](#) show that on 31 March 2025, there were 7,072 children looked after in Wales, with 68% living in foster care placements and we estimate that around 400 additional foster families are needed in Wales.

In our State of the Nations [report](#), 56% of foster carers in Wales said they had considered resigning from fostering, with 26% citing financial difficulties as a contributing factor. Fostering services also identified finances, including the cost of living and the level of financial support available to foster carers, as one of the main barriers to recruiting new foster carers.

Recruiting more foster families and retaining experienced foster carers will be essential to ensuring children can access the care they need within their local communities. Council tax support is one practical measure that can contribute to these wider recruitment and retention efforts.

Current council tax support in Wales

Support for foster carers currently varies considerably across Wales. Of Wales' 22 local authorities, 11 (50%) offer some form of council tax discount or exemption for foster carers, while the remaining 11 do not.

Five authorities (22.7%) offer a full or up to 100% council tax discount. A further five authorities (22.7%) offer up to a 50% discount, and one authority (4.5%) offers a 30% discount.

The fact that 11 local authorities have already introduced council tax discounts or exemptions demonstrates that it can be implemented in Wales. However, support remains inconsistent, creating a postcode lottery where foster carers undertaking the same role can receive different levels of support depending on where they live. The creation of Foster Wales has strengthened collaboration between local authority fostering services and enabled some councils to share learning, business cases and implementation approaches as more authorities explore council tax support schemes. Council tax is currently listed under 'Additional local offers' that some local authorities provide as part of the National Commitment but not listed as a specific incentive that should be provided.¹

What foster carers and local authorities are telling us

As part of developing this campaign, The Fostering Network discussed council tax support with members of the Wales Foster Carer Advisory Board. There was strong support for extending the campaign to Wales.

Foster carers told us that council tax support could:

- recognise the contribution foster carers make
- help foster carers feel valued
- support retention
- strengthen recruitment efforts

The strongest message was not about financial gain, but council tax support as a visible sign of recognition.

¹ <https://fosterwales.gov.wales/fostering-allowances-and-support-in-wales/>

Discussions with local authorities echoed this and described council tax support as most effective when delivered as part of a wider package of support and highlighted the importance of political support, engagement with elected members and careful implementation.

For example, Pembrokeshire described its council tax exemption pilot as part of a wider strategy to increase local authority fostering capacity, while Merthyr Tydfil reported that council tax support had been positively received by foster carers.

Both authorities emphasised that council tax support should be viewed as one element of a broader recruitment and retention offer rather than a standalone intervention.

The Fostering Network's call

With half of Welsh local authorities already offering some form of council tax support for foster carers, there is an opportunity to build on existing local practice and move towards a more consistent national approach across Wales.

We are calling on:

- Welsh Government to review council tax support currently available to foster carers across Wales.
- Welsh Government to assess the impact of council tax support on recruitment, retention and foster carer wellbeing.
- Foster Wales to develop a more nationally consistent approach to council tax support for foster carers as part of their National Commitment.
- Local authorities to consider and offer a council tax exemption for their foster carers.
- Welsh Government to work towards the long-term ambition of a national council tax exemption for foster carers so that carers in both IFAs and LAs could benefit.