

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 2556
Email: private.office@health-ni.gov.uk

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Dear foster/kinship carer

I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks for your continued and unwavering support during what I know has been a hugely challenging year for you all. I know that many of you have risen to the significant challenge of home schooling and the general pressure that the COVID-19 restrictions have placed on families, no longer able to do the things that families do in normal circumstances. As a father, I fully recognise how difficult this can be and has been.

Unfortunately, the restrictions have been necessary to try to get on top of the virus and to hopefully help us return as quickly as possible to some semblance of normality. The inclusion of all foster carers in Northern Ireland's vaccination programme is intended to be a recognition of the significance of the role that you play for around 2,600 children and young people. It is also why we increased fostering allowances during the first wave of the pandemic.

I have decided to apply a further increase in foster carer allowances and fees will provide a 20% uplift in the food and household cost elements of fostering allowances (per child) between January and March 2021. I have asked officials to ensure that the payments are made promptly. Again, this is a measure of the appreciation that I have for the incredible work that you do and the selfless roles that you play.

My heartfelt thanks to you all.



Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health

