

DEVON FOSTER CARERS' ASSOCIATION



Our **Tax Seminar** on 10th March was a **HUGE** success and every carer who attended fed back that they found it really useful and helpful. The **ATTACHED** information sheet shows some of the key points for ALL of us to remember when receiving any payments from Devon County Council. General guidance on fostering and tax can be found on HMRC website, <https://www.gov.uk/foster-carers/help-with-the-cost-of-fostering> , but carers are **STRONGLY** advised to check their own individual personal circumstances carefully.

Also **ATTACHED** is an abridged version of HMRC Help Sheet 236 on Qualifying Care Relief for foster carers (and others). A full copy of the sheet can be obtained from HMRC for a small charge

To ensure they receive the benefit of Class 2 National Insurance credits when they retire, Carers need to have at hand a copy of a letter from Children's Services confirming how long they've been caring for Devon.

In the absence of a full annual financial statement, Carers can receive a print-out of all payments made to them by Devon County Council each year. If you need one, for your tax returns, simply contact the Finance team direct and ask for one.

It was agreed at our last meeting (13th March) that we would compile a list of **insurers** and **accountants** across the County that understand our unique circumstances.

Attached! 😊



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REMEMBER: All foster carers registered with Devon are automatic members of **The Fostering Network**. Their helpline is a major benefit and carers can contact them direct, assured of complete discretion about anything to do with their fostering role (or about fostering issues generally). **Any Carers who are unsure about whether they have been enrolled as members, or have not been receiving the Foster Care magazine, should contact either The Fostering Network direct, or their Supervising Social worker, to check it out. Don't miss out!!**

List of Attractions and Library Lending List **attached**.

It was agreed at our last meeting to also provide carers countywide with a List of Accountants and Insurers used by foster carers across the whole County of Devon, who may, consequently, understand our unique circumstances. **ATTACHED**

Turn2Us is a national charity that offers advice on money issues, advice and support with homelessness and helps people gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and support services (among other things). It also has an **online benefits calculator** which may be of use to both foster carers, and carers who are supporting young people in care leaving the care system and branching out on their own for the first time.
<http://www.adviceuk.org.uk/turn2us-benefits-calculator/>

Usual Copy **CONSTITUTION** (outlining our Aims and Objectives) **attached**, together with **MINUTES** of our last meeting on 13th March 2017

Fostering Fortnight is fast approaching (**8th – 29th May**) - if anyone would like us to organise a particular event to mark the date, please do contact one of us

DON'T FORGET our Sons & Daughters' Event during Sons and Daughters' week this year (**Information Sheet attached**). If you're interested, please contact Mandy Heggadon direct as soon as possible made.



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AND FINALLY –

South West Water Authority have a scheme whereby carers may be entitled to have a 'cap' on their water bills. **The Water Sure Scheme** affords savings if a carer has a young person placed with them with a skin condition and subject to a disability. This could potentially save carers half the cost of their bills! Why not check it out – and let us know how you get on!



Sons and Daughters Event – It is proposed that we organise an event for Foster Carers which will recognise and celebrate the huge contribution that our children make to our fostering families. Something different, that is a fun and positive experience is being considered.

There are two options that we are able to offer. Both would take place at the Manor House and Ashbury Hotels at Okehampton <http://www.manorhousehotel.co.uk/> This venue offers 2 indoor swimming pools, 7 golf courses, 12 indoor sports courts, crazy and adventure golf, evening entertainment, snooker and pool halls, ten-pin bowling, short bowls and an ice-rink to name but a few of the activities on offer, so suitable for all ages. Both Hotels share facilities so you can stay in one hotel but access activities in the other one as well. The main golf courses are at Ashbury

Option 1: Half-term event Friday 27th and Saturday 28th October 2017 (Sunday day time) a three day, 2-night break – Prices are calculated on age of children and how many people in a room so you will need to check prices for your family on-line but as a guide:

1 adult would cost £173 - £15.57 discount = £157.43 (discount will be given for a group booking for more than 26 adults and payment in full by July 22nd)

Children in a family room with One Adult, if the child is age 9 – 17 (70%) = £121.10

Child age 2 – 8 years (50%) £86.50, Baby in a cot up to 2 years (10%) £17.30 and a Baby in a Carry Cot up to 3 months is Free

If is slightly cheaper for children who are sharing a room with two adults.

Children up to 17 years in a separate room with no adults pay (70%) £ 121.10

There are many types of rooms, including family suites, triple rooms and family rooms.

Option 2: Christmas Event approx. £60 for adults £20 for children – 1 nights' accommodation and Christmas meal, breakfast the next day. (Prices as of Dec 2016, so may be slightly more this year but no information available at this early date), which would be a Saturday.

Prices are fully inclusive of all meals.



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This is a whole family event, foster children, our extended family and our special sons and daughters are all invited. It is hoped that we will organise one or two events to bring us all together during the three days but most of the time families will be free to do as they chose. One of these events will be a 'Thank You' celebration for own Sons and Daughters.

This is a fantastic opportunity for us all to come together.

If you're interested in taking part, could you please contact Mandy Heggadon on 07763455586 / heggml5@gmail.com with your preferred option, or, if you need more details, check out the website for the hotels and Mandy will do her best to answer any questions. We do hope you will join us. It's a rare opportunity for us all to be able to get together with ALL of our families and just have some fun!

DON'T FORGET

our next meeting on

28th April 2017 at 10.30 a.m.

Oaklands Court, Tiverton.

Hope to see you there!

How to contact us; -

- **via** Facebook. Simply 'friend request' one of us, (Patricia Bagshaw, Leigh Strange, Nicky Knight or Mandy Heggadon) on Facebook and, once we've checked you are who you say you are, we'll add you to the closed group. After that, simply look for Devon Foster Carer's Association and you should be able to find us,

OR;

- **via** any one of our committee (so far!) Trish Bagshaw (North), Lewis Crowden (Exeter), Leigh Strange (North), Mandy Heggadon (Exeter & East), Sarah Turner (Exeter & East), David Leyland (South) or Rosemary Miles. We have carers from all walks, with all kinds of reasons for fostering and with all kinds of experiences. Feel free to contact any of us for any information about the Association and what we're doing on **YOUR** behalf.

If anyone would like to join us or help in any way, please do just let us know – the more the merrier.

