



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP  
Minister for Social Security and Disability  
Department for Work and Pensions  
by email

Our Ref: EC03716/TM

10 September 2025

Dear Sir Stephen

**Re: Work Search Requirements for Foster Carers**

I am writing to you after being contacted by a constituent who is a foster carer and has highlighted an issue with Universal Credit (UC) that will be affecting other foster carers.

My constituent and his partner claim UC as a couple and they are both registered foster carers. My constituent stopped working seven years ago to devote his time to the children that he and his partner foster. They are both level 3 foster carers, meaning they are called on to help train and support less experienced foster carers.

They care for three children, one of whom is a baby. They currently drive two separate school runs to three different schools covering 60 miles per day. All the foster children have complex needs due to trauma in their past, although none receive disability benefits. They are all required to attend contact meetings with their birth parents. In addition to this my constituent and his partner are expected to attend training sessions, a variety of meetings and they must complete paperwork for each child.

Despite the fact the Local Authority employs and pays a fee to them both, the DWP only recognises one of them as a foster carer. The UC regulations stipulate that where both members of a couple are foster carers they can nominate one of them to be the responsible foster parent. This means my constituent has had to comply with all work-related requirements in addition to his foster caring responsibilities.

Given that there is a shortfall of foster carers, reported by the Fostering Network to be a result of retention problems; please could you confirm whether the Government has any plans to review this policy to give all foster carers the recognition that they deserve?

Yours sincerely

Ellie Chowns MP  
Member of Parliament for North Herefordshire

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