

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday 14th May 2020

Report of the Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption, Residential, and Youth Offending Services

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Foster Care Allowances 2020/21

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

Proposals for the increase of Foster Care Allowance rates for 2020/21, in line with National Minimum Standards.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the increase in the current scale of Foster Care Allowances, other than where specified, as set out at Appendix 'A'.

This decision should be implemented immediately for the purposes of Standing Order C29 as any delay could adversely affect the execution of the county council's responsibilities. The reason for this is that the decision has been designated as business critical by the relevant Executive Director, and any delay in its implementation would have an adverse effect on the operations of the county council.

Background and Advice

In March 2009, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People approved a fostering strategy, which amongst other things, agreed that the county council's Fostering Allowances should be linked to the Government National Minimum Foster Care Allowances. This requirement is now enshrined in legislation.

In 2011, the Fostering Service introduced a new Tier based payment structure which allows the Council to pay carers a range of different allowances which are dependent upon the level of skill, experience and service the carer is able to offer.

Tier 1 - payments are in line with the recommended National Minimum Standard
Tier 2 - payments provide an enhancement, currently £115 per week above Tier 1
Tier 3 - payments provide an enhancement, currently £230 per week above Tier 1
Tier 3+ - payments are negotiated on a place by place basis depending upon the complexity of the placement.

It is recommended that these payments are not amended for 2020/21.

The Government National Minimum Foster Care Allowances have been updated for 2020/21, and it is proposed that the rates for Lancashire also be updated, to ensure that the requirements of the fostering strategy are maintained, and that the service meets regulatory requirements.

It is recommended that other allowances such as those for Holiday, Birthday, Religious Festivals and discretionary payments covering clothing and school uniform, all remain unchanged for 2020/21.

It is proposed that the enhancement element of the weekly allowances for Tier 2 and Tier 3 payments remain unchanged for 2020/21. Fostering Focus Fees and Specialist Allowances will also remain unchanged as these schemes are being phased out following the introduction of the new scheme.

Details of the above are set out at Appendix 'A'.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

No significant risk Management implications have been identified; the estimated cost of this proposal will be met from within the Fostering Service Budget.

Financial

The estimated cost of the proposals is £306,000 which has been provided for within the 2020/21 revenue estimates.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A