

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 8 June 2023

Report of the Director of Children's Social Care

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;

Revision of Foster Care Allowances 2023/24

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

Proposals for the increase of Foster Care Allowance rates for 2023/24, in line with National Minimum Standards.

Proposals for the increase of Foster Care fee rates for 2023/24, in line with Consumer Price Index.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the increase in the current scale of Foster Care Allowances and Fees, as set out at Appendix 'A'.

Detail

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 March 2022, the Fostering Service carried out a review of allowances and fees and introduced a revised payment structure. The previous Skill Fee Allowance was replaced with the following:

- Foster Carer Fee, an age-related fee with different fees for age banded groups 0-10 and 11-17.
- Fee Plus, a wide structure of additional fees set out under two distinct categories.
- Contributions to the service, at specified rates depending upon a number of specific roles.
- Payments for sibling group placements.

These payments are uplifted each year in line with the Consumer Price Index.

The Government National Minimum Foster Care Allowances have been updated for 2023/24, 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 also recommended that other allowances such as those for Holiday, Birthday, Religious Festivals, and discretionary payments covering clothing and school uniform, also receive an annual increase in line with the Consumer Price Index for 2023/24.

The proposed Foster Care Allowances and Fees for 2023/24 are set out at Appendix 'A'.

Consultations

N/A

Appendices

Appendix 'A' is attached to this report. For clarification it is summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	Foster Care Allowances and Fees

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 c£800,000, which is slightly higher than budgeted, due to inflation being higher than the forecast included within the 2023/24 budget. However, the service will endeavour to manage the additional pressure within the agreed budget envelope for 2023/24.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

