

REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting: 27 March 2018

Subject: Foster Carer Payments

Key Decision: No

Responsible Officer: Paul Hewitt, Interim Corporate Director of People

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools

Exempt: No

Decision subject to Call-in: No

Wards affected: All

Enclosures: Report on Harrow Council Fostering Payments

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out updated proposals in regards to fostering payments for the year 2018- 2019.

Recommendations:

Panel is requested to note the content of the report.

Reason: The Corporate Parenting Panel to understand the payments system to foster carers and the range of activities this covers.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

This is an information report only outlining the updated guidance regarding payments to foster carers. This outlines the rate of payments which are in line with the recent National Fostering stocktake. This report also outlines expectations of how foster carers will spend their payments to ensure that the day to day needs of Harrow's Looked After Children are met and that Looked After Children are provided with a wide range of opportunities and experiences.

The payments are very competitive. The tiered rates recognise the varying complexities of need. This also will mean that children previously placed in higher cost residential and Independent Fostering Agencies can be placed with in-house foster carers.

This report follows consultation with the Harrow Foster Carer Association and has been signed off by the Director of Childrens Services

Options Considered

None.

Legal Implications

The Secretary of State for Education conducted a national fostering stocktake for England during 2017. Their findings and recommendations are set out in their report, Foster Care in England, published in February 2018.

Foster carers get an allowance to cover the cost of caring for a child. The Government sets the recommended national minimum rates and they are updated every April. They range from £125 a week to care for a baby in areas of England other than London or the south east, to £219 a week to care for a 16 or 17-year-old in London. In addition to the allowance, which is intended to cover the costs of caring for the foster child, nearly all fostering services also pay carers a fee - or a reward - on top of the fostering allowance. Although the Government sets the rates for the allowance, it is for individual fostering services and local authorities separately to decide the size of the fee they pay their foster carers.

Financial Implications

Foster carer payments are funded within the overall placements budget. Inhouse foster carer placements represent good value for money being more cost effective than independent fostering agencies or residential placements. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The payments paper outlines expectations of foster carers and ensures all Looked After Children are treated fairly.

Looked After Children come from diverse backgrounds and have a wide range of needs. A range of foster placements are needed to ensure the Council is able to respond to the level of support children and young people present with.

Council Priorities

This report outlines how foster carers support Looked After Children and corresponds directly to the Council priorities of supporting families and supporting the vulnerable

3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 12 March 2018		
Name: Pretal Varsani-Patel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 15 March 2018		

Ward Councillors notified:	NO, as it impacts on all Wards
EqIA carried out:	NO
EqIA cleared by:	N/A - Information report only

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Report Author's name, Job Title, direct telephone number and email address.

Peter Tolley Head of Service Corporate Parenting 0208 736 6943

Background Papers: None.