

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Service

DECISION NUMBER:

25/00010

For publication [Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]

Key decision: YES / NO

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or
- b) be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:
 - significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Proposed Revisions of Rates Payable by Kent County Council for Children’s Social Care Services in 2025-26

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services, I agree to:

- a)
 - i. The weekly Foster Care Maintenance allowance is increased to:

All placements under 2 years old	£203.54
All placements 2 to 4 years old	£211.08
All placements 5 to 10 years old	£232.62
All placements 11 to 15 years old	£266.00
All placements over 16 years old	£310.15

- ii. The weekly Foster Care Reward element is increased to:

Non-related placements 0 to 8 years old	£150.53
Non-related placements 9 to 18 years old	£285.92

- iii. The weekly Foster Care Disability Enhancement is increased to:

Standard	£85.78
Enhanced	£114.37

- iv. The weekly Foster Care Skills Based Payment is increased to:

Skilled (Level 2)	£26.98
Advanced (Level 3)	£67.39

v. The weekly Emergency Foster Carer Retainer payment is increased to:

Retainer	£285.92
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vi. The one-off payment to Emergency Foster Carers towards additional essentials for newly arrived unaccompanied asylum seeking children:

One-off (clothing & toiletries)	£100.00
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vii. The hourly Sessional & Day Care payments increase to:

Sessional Work	£12.71
Day Care	£12.71

viii. The rates for Mockingbird Hub Home Carer payments to be set at:

Standard weekly payment	£710.44
Social Activities additional payment	£100.00

ix. The sessional rate for Kent Fostering Panel attendance:

Panel Chair	£421.89
Panel Member	£158.21

x. The Foster Carer Mileage Rate will remain at 45p per mile in line with KCC staff.

xi. The adoption hospitality allowance for foster carers will be set at £25.00 per day.

xii. The additional rates for the Step Across to Fostering Scheme to be set at:

Settling in Period (one-off payment)	£5,000
Retention Payment (4 th Month one-off payment)	£2,500
Retention Payment (8 th Month one-off payment)	£2,500
Retention Payment (12 th Month one-off payment)	£2,500
Retention Payment (18 th Month one-off payment)	£2,500
Retainer (weekly payment)	£285.92
Vacant Bed (weekly payment max. 4 weeks)	£285.92

xiii. The Kent Supported Homes (Supporting Lodging payments to hosts) is increased to:

Standard Support (per week)	£185.84
Enhanced Support (per week)	£309.72
Complex Support (legacy cases only) (per week)	£200.00
Mother and Baby Arrangement Support (per week)	£371.66
Outreach support (per hour)	£12.71
Rent (16/17 year old and 18+ who are not eligible to claim benefits) (per week)	£86.72
Rent (University non-term time)	LHA** rate
Staying Put Extended Foster Care Rate	Various**

*LHA – Local Housing Authority

**Various – the rate will depend on circumstances and agreed in line with the Staying Put policy.

b) Updates to the Kent Fostering Payment Policy for 2025-26, an overarching policy document to set out all foster payments.

c) **NOTE:**

The rates which are dictated by external agencies i.e. Inter-agency charges and Essential Living Allowance

d) **DELEGATE:**

Authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, or other nominated officers, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

Background

The rates payable by Children's Services are reviewed annually, with any revisions normally introduced from the start of the new financial year.

Some of the increases are directly linked to the published Department for Education fostering rates, which are reviewed by the Department annually.

Financial Implications

The increase in payments and income have been reflected in the Council's budget plans presented to County Council on February 2025 under the heading "Prices - Children's Social Care Disabled & Non-Disabled Children" at just over £3.0m.

Legal implications

The national minimum standards, together with regulations on the placement of children in foster care, such as the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of fostering services. The report distinguishes between those rates over which Members can exercise their discretion, and those set by Government or external agencies.

Equalities implications

We have not assessed any adverse impact within these proposals to increase funding rates for children's services.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee considered the decision on 27th February 2025.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The alternatives would be to either:

- Freeze the rates at 2024-25 level or apply a lower percentage increase than proposed. This was rejected on the basis that the security of an annual uplift continues to form part of Kent Fostering's approach to improving the recruitment and retention of foster carers by enabling

the service to provide a more competitive package in the carer's marketplace and by not applying a reasonable uplift could put at risk this strategy.

- Apply a higher percentage uplift than propose. This was rejected on the basis that this would be unaffordable within the allocated budget.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None

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signed

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date