

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Paul Webb, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00004

Executive Decision – key**26/0004 – Proposed Revisions of Rates Payable and Charges Levied by Kent County Council for Children's Social Care Services in 2026-27****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	£210.00
All placements 2 to 4 years old	£218.62
All placements 5 to 10 years old	£240.15
All placements 11 to 15 years old	£274.62
All placements over 16 years old	£320.92

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

Non-related placements 0 to 8 years old	£156.70
Non-related placements 9 to 18 years old	£297.64

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

Standard	£89.30
Enhanced	£119.06

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

Skilled (Level 2)	£28.09
Advanced (Level 3)	£70.15

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

Retainer	£297.64
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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	£13.21
Day Care	£13.21

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

Standard weekly payment	£737.62
Social Activities additional payment	£100.00

- ix. The sessional rate for Kent Fostering Panel attendance:

Panel Chair	£439.19
Panel Member	£164.70

- 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)	£297.64
Vacant Bed (weekly payment max. 4 weeks)	£297.64

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

Standard Support (per week)	£193.46
Enhanced Support (per week)	£322.42
Complex Support (legacy cases only) (per week)	£200.00
Mother and Baby Arrangement Support (per week)	£386.90
Outreach support (per hour)	£13.21

Rent (16/17 year old and 18+ who are not eligible to claim benefits) (per week)	£90.28
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) NOTE:

- i. The rates which are dictated by external agencies i.e. Inter-agency charges and Essential Living Allowance
- ii. Direct Payments will continue to be reviewed on an individual basis through support planning and review processes to enable the Council to respond to individual circumstances.

c) 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.

Reasons for decision:

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 £1.6m. A further £0.2m was included in the same budget as a general provision of inflationary increases linked to Direct Payment reviews.

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.

Data Protection implications: None

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision was considered and endorsed by the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 17 March 2026.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The alternatives would be to either:

- Freeze the rates at 2025-26 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
- Apply a variable uplift across different foster carer payments (outside the normal methodology: This was rejected at this stage as a wider review of the foster carer offer and payments is being completed.

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

None



14/04/2026

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Signed

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Date