

From: Matt Dunkley, CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

Subject: **Proposed Revision of Rates Payable and Charges Levied for Children's Services in 2019-20**

Decision Number: 19/00014

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This paper sets out the proposed revision to the rates payable and charges levied for children's services within Kent for the 2019-20 financial year.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to:

- (i) **APPROVE** the proposed changes to the rates payable and charges levied for Children's Services in 2019-20 as detailed in section 2 of this report.
- (ii) **NOTE** both the changes to the rates that are set by the Government/external agencies: Inter-agency charges and Essential Living Allowance and; any charges to other Local Authorities for use of in-house respite residential beds are to be calculated on a full cost recovery basis.
- (iii) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is produced annually and seeks approval for the Council's proposed rates and charges levied for the forthcoming financial year.
- 1.2 The report distinguishes between these rates and charges over which Members can exercise their discretion and those which are set by the Government/external agencies.
- 1.3 In relation to those rates and charges where Members can exercise their discretion, we have traditionally increased these annually in line with the annual CPI increase. In recent times, as CPI has been so low, a hybrid blended model has been adopted which included CPI and the average

percentage increase for KCC pay performance. For 2019-20, the average percentage increase for KCC pay performance is approximately 2.8% which is slightly higher than the CPI increase between September 2016 and September 2017 of +2.4%; we believe using the higher rate of 2.8% represents a fair and responsible percentage increase and have therefore used the average percentage increase for KCC pay performance as the inflation indicator (except in the case of the skills based payment where CPI has historically been used). In addition, we are proposing to align the mileage rate paid to foster carers with that received by KCC staff, by increasing the rate from 35p to 45p per mile.

- 1.4 The effective date for these proposed rate changes is 1 April 2019 and they will apply until 31 March 2020 or until a decision is taken to revise these rates further, whichever is sooner.
- 1.5 In relation to the proposed increases to the rates we pay, additional funding has been included within the Directorate’s 2019-20 budget proposals, under the heading “Inflation - Children’s Social Care” at just over £1.7m. This calculation includes an assumed uplift for all in-house fostering and associated payments.

2. Rates payable and charges levied for Children’s Services

- 2.1 The remainder of this report set out the methodology for each proposed rate increase. Attached at appendix 1 is a list of all rates and charges proposed for 2019-20 compared to the approved 2018-19 rates and charges.

2.2 Adoption Service Charges

Inter-Agency Charges – Voluntary Adoption Agencies and Local Authorities

The inter-agency fee for adoption was first introduced in 1992 to reflect the expenditure incurred in family finding, preparation and placement of children. These charges are agreed by the following; Local Government Agency (LGA), Consortium of Voluntary Agencies (CVAA), Association of Directors of Children Services (ADCS) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executive (SOLACE) and therefore are not within our discretion to alter. The rates between Local Authorities remain unchanged since 2014-15.

In 2018, the CVAA announced the decision to link the interagency rate for Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA) to the CPIH measure (including owner occupier’s house costs) for the preceding financial year. This is to reflect the upward pressure on staff salaries and the complexity of work involved in the adoption placements. This included a retrospective increase between 2011 and 2018 of 14%. The increase for 2019-20 has been set as 2%, reflecting the CPIH measure for 2018.

Local Authority	
One Child	£27,000
2 Siblings	£43,000

3+ Siblings	£60,000
Voluntary Adoption Agencies*	
One Child	£31,620
2 Siblings	£51,000
3 Siblings	£69,360
4 Siblings	£79,560
5 Siblings	Negotiation
On-going Supervision	£877.00

*a 10% uplift is applied for agencies based in Greater London area

Review of the Interagency Fee

Discussions regarding the structure of the fee for sibling groups are ongoing between CVAA and ADCS. We await the review findings.

2.3 Foster Care Payments

a) Maintenance

The Council has traditionally maintained a direct link to the Department for Education (DfE) published fostering rates. The DfE have now published their 2019-20 Fostering Rates (<https://www.gov.uk/fostercarers/help-with-the-cost-of-fostering>). The figures shown in the table below have been calculated by taking the DfE published rates, divide by 52 and multiple by 56. This provides an additional four weeks of funding to Kent foster carers to cover holidays, birthdays, religious observations and Christmas.

	2019-20 Minimum weekly rates
All placements under 2 years old	£154.00
All placements 2 to 4 years old	£158.31
All placements 5 to 10 years old	£175.54
All placements 11 to 15 years old	£199.23
All placements over 16 years old	£234.77

Please note that these rates also apply to Permanency Arrangement Orders payments within Children's Services e.g. Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders.

b) Reward Element

An increase of +2.8% based on the average increase for the KCC pay reward is proposed for 2019-20.

- Non-related placements for 0 to 8 years old £116.78 per week
- Non-related placement for 9 to 18 years old £221.82 per week

c) Disability Enhancement

An enhancement will be paid to all foster carers of disabled children whose case is open to the Disabled Children's Service or Sensory Loss Team. An assessment is undertaken by the child's social worker to determine the level of needs, presented to the funding panel. The enhancement rate is to be reviewed on a yearly basis. There are currently two rates:

Standard – Carers will receive an enhancement payment of 30% uplift of the higher reward element.

This equates to a rate of £66.55 per week.

Enhanced – Carers will receive an enhancement payment of 40% uplift of the higher reward element.

This equates to a rate of £88.73 per week.

2.4 Foster Care Skills Based Payments

Payment for Skills was introduced in 2007 and is based on foster carers meeting a required level of competence through qualifications and a competency framework. This is currently under review, to allow greater flexibility for progression through the skills levels, rewarding years of service and wider contributions to Kent Fostering, alongside existing training and qualifications. The review is being undertaken with the Foster Carer ambassadors and Kent Foster Carer Association (KFCA).

It is recommended that these rates receive an uplift in line with the CPI rate +2.4%. The proposed new rates for 2019-20 are:

Level 2 £21.55 per week

Level 3 £53.84 per week

Any recommended changes following the review would be presented to members for agreement before implementation.

2.5 Specialist Foster Care Payments

Single Placement Supplement

This is calculated as twice the age-related reward element

Age 0 to 8 years old £233.56

Age 9 to 18 years old £443.64

2.6 **Foster Carer Mileage Rate**

Foster carers are reimbursed for travel which is considered to be over and above the day to day family life or where there is expected to be unusually high travel to meet the needs of the child. It is proposed the mileage rates paid to foster carers is increased from 35p and 45p per mile to bring them in line with KCC staff.

2.7 **Essential Living Allowance**

This is the weekly payment to Care Leavers including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). The rate payable is in line with the Job Seeking Allowance for a single adult aged under 25 of £57.90 from 1 April 2019. Please note that this rate has been frozen at the 2018-19 amount.

2.8 **Other Local Authority Charges**

a) Social work support and assessment

This relates to KCC social workers undertaking work on behalf of other local authorities. The proposed rate for 2019-20 is £74.40 per hour.

b) Administration fee associated with social work support and assessment

This relates to the administration fee to cover the time associated with recharging other local authorities, and it is credited to the social work team claiming the recharge. The proposed flat rate for 2019-20 is £20.00 per invoice.

c) Residential Respite Service

This relates to a charge we make to other local authorities who place children in our in-house respite residential beds. The value of the charge will be agreed by the operational service on an individual home basis, and will be calculated based on full cost recovery.

3. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to:

- (i) **APPROVE** the proposed changes to the rates payable and charges levied for Children's Services in 2019-20 as detailed in section 2 of this report.
- (ii) **NOTE** both the changes to the rates that are set by the Government/external agencies: Inter-agency charges and Essential Living Allowance and; any charges to other Local Authorities for use of in-house respite residential beds are to be calculated on a full cost recovery basis.

- (iii) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision.

4. Background Documents

None

5. Contact details

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