

Equality analysis and impact assessment

Directorate or Service Children, Young People and Education, Kent Fostering Service

Name of document under assessment Fostering Payments Policy

Document owner Caroline Smith, Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting

Document author Maria Cordrey, Team Manager County Fostering Assessment Team 1

Version 1.1

Pathway of analysis

Version	Author	Date	Comment
N/A	Task and Finish Group Including Foster Carer, Fostering Team Managers, Fostering Training, Foster Carer Ambassadors and Reps	April 2018 to March 2019	Consultation and suggestions on review of payment and skills criteria
N/A	DIVMT	March 2019	Agreed payment for skills criteria.
N/A	Foster Carer Ambassadors	November 2020	Consultation and suggestions on solo and complex placements
1	Maria Cordrey	January 2020	First draft
1	Nicola Anthony and Mark Vening	February 2020	Consultation and suggestions
1.1	Maria Cordrey	February 2020	Amendments
1.1	Caroline Smith	February 2020	Sign off

Review date April 2021

Adverse impact rating **Low**
A low rating of relevance to the protected characteristics group has been attributed to the process of initial screening

Summary and recommendations

Context: This is a proposal to introduce one clear policy which details the Fostering Service's different types of provision and payment structures. Previously payments had been published within the annual rates and charges booklet and on the Kent Fostering website. This has been in a grid format, detailing the basic reward and maintenance payments, with no detail on specific schemes such as Parent and Child or our Payment for Skills offer.

Aims and objectives: The introduction of one clear policy, including payments table, will make clear to staff, current foster carers and new applicants what the payment and support offer is, making the agency more competitive within the local market. This would be updated yearly with specific financial detail as part of the annual rates and charges review.

The proposed changes are as follows:

- Changes in payments for Parent and Child Foster Carers (addressed in a separate EqIA).
- Single Placement Supplement changes to a "Solo" or "Complex" payment which is double the reward element. There has always been the ability to pay this within the current structure, but it has primarily been used for children who require a placement on their own, due to the risk they pose to other children. Introducing "Complex" would enable it to be used for young people on remand or stepping down from residential care, with the aim to reduce some of our high cost placements.
- Changes in the terminology for Payment for Skills to Foundation, Skilled and Advanced. Criteria changes to the scheme were agreed at Divmt in 2019, the actual rates for Level 1-3 remain unchanged.
- Changes for Emergency Bed Payments were agreed as a Key Decision in January 2020.

The proposal is to seek the agreement for the payments structure for implementation from 1st April 2020.

Summary of impact: The equality impact assessment is a fair assessment of the proposed Fostering Payments policy, which brings clarity to the different types of provision offered by the agency and makes transparent the Local Authority offer to Foster Carers with the aim of increasing our in house provision, retaining foster carers as a valued resource and reducing

spend on external placements.

The equality impact assessment has not identified any concerns with regards to the protected characteristics of children, young people or foster carers, impacted by the introduction of the Fostering Payments Policy.

I confirm that I have read and paid due regard to the equality analysis and impact assessment concerning th Fostering Payments Policy.

I agree with the risk rating and actions to mitigate any adverse impact(s) that has or have been identified.

Heads of Service

Nicole Anthony



Head of Fostering (East)

27 February 2020

Mark Vening



Head of Fostering (West)

27 February 2020

DMT member

Caroline Smith



Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting Thursday 27 February 2020

Part 1 Screening

Could this document under assessment affect any protected group that is listed below, less favourably than others? Could this document promote equal opportunities for any protected group?

	High negative impact (EqIA)	Medium negative impact (screen)	Low negative impact (evidence)	High, medium or low positive impact (evidence)
Age	None	None	None	This proposal applies to all children, young people and foster carers. There is positive impact as the policy makes transparent the different types of provision within the fostering service and the payments attached to those provisions, which are either the same or more favourable than currently.
Disability	None	None	None	The proposal does not discriminate against disability and equal opportunities are in place. The recruitment of foster carers for all fostering schemes is in line with the Fostering Regulations, National

				Minimum Standards and the Local Authorities fair recruitment policy.
Sex	None	None	None	<p>This proposal does not discriminate against sex and equal opportunities are in place. Clear matching will continue.</p> <p>Fair recruitment process for Foster Carers.</p>
Gender identity and reassignment	None	None	None	<p>This proposal does not discriminate against gender identity / transgender and equal opportunities are in place. Clear matching will continue.</p> <p>Fair recruitment process for Foster Carers.</p>
Race	None	None	None	<p>This proposal does not discriminate against race and equal opportunities are in place. Clear matching of Parent and Child arrangements will continue.</p> <p>Fair recruitment process for Foster Carers.</p>
Religion and belief	None	None	None	This proposal does not

				<p>discriminate against religion and belief systems and equal opportunities are in place. Clear matching of will continue.</p> <p>Fair recruitment process for Foster Carers.</p>
Sexual orientation	None	None	No	<p>This proposal does not discriminate against sexual orientation and equal opportunities are in place. Clear matching will continue.</p> <p>Fair recruitment process for Foster Carers.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	None	None	No	<p>This proposal does not discriminate against pregnancy and maternity and equal opportunities are in place. Clear matching of will continue.</p> <p>Fair recruitment process for Foster Carers.</p>
Marriage and civil partnerships	N/A	N/A	N/A	<p>This proposal does not discriminate against the marital or relationship status of parents or Foster Carers.</p>

				Fair recruitment process for Foster Carers.
Carers responsibilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	This proposal does not discriminate against parents or Foster Carers who have additional caring responsibilities. Due regard is given to individual circumstances as part of any assessment.

Part 2

Equality analysis and impact assessment

Protected groups

None of the protected groups will be negatively affected by this policy.

Information and data used to carry out this assessment

The introduction of a clear payments policy including those payments being published in a more transparent way, will support the agency to retain our foster carers who already have the capability or have the potential to develop skills in looking after our most complex children and young people.

It will also allow us to attract carers who already have the skills and expertise to care for those children with significant risk-taking behaviours and are at risk of entering residential care or need to step down from residential care.

Finance figures have been provided by the Local Authority Revenue Accountancy Team and overseen by the Finance Manager.

Data in regard to current in house foster carers has been provided by the Management Information Unit.

Who has been consulted and engaged

The payments policy was written in January 2020 and is informed by approximately two years of informal continuous engagement with foster carers, gathering their views and suggestions. Formal consultation has also taken place within this time via the Foster Carer Ambassadors and the Foster Carers Advisory Board.

A working group regarding Payment for Skills was also established and directly informed the development of the new Skills Criteria, agreed at DivMT.

The ConTroCC operations groups have received the change request for all fostering schemes where enhanced payments are being introduced (as for parent and child) or language has changed for these schemes.

The policy was taken to DivMT on 17th February 2020 and DMT on 26th February 2020.

Analysis

The proposals under the new policy should have only positive impact on children, young people and foster carers. The protected characteristics are valued where recruitment and retention of foster carers for all fostering schemes is concerned, as well as the opportunities provided to children and young people who are placed under those schemes.

Adverse impact

There are no adverse effects as a result of this new proposal.

Positive impact

Our children, their parents and foster carers will continue to receive services in accordance with their needs and not be excluded because of their protected characteristics.

The current Payment for Skills Structure, rewards foster carers primarily based on their academic ability which KCC have received a challenge on, in the fairness of this pathway and our career development/rewards for foster carers with many years of experience who do not have the academic skills to progress. The new system will be a fairer process and is evidence based, linked to the experience and skills demonstrated through the foster carers annual review.

JUDGEMENT**No major change**

No potential for discrimination and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

Internal action required

NO