

By: Anthony Kamps, Principal Accountant CFE

To: Chris Wells, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Achievement, CFE

Subject: REVISION OF RATES PAYABLE AND CHARGES LEVIED FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN FINANCIAL YEAR 2008-09.

Summary: To seek approval for the revision of the rates payable and charges levied for the services listed below in 2008-09

Introduction

1. (1) This report is produced annually and seeks approval of the Directorate's proposed rates and charges levied for the forthcoming financial year in line with the approved budget.

(2) All proposed rates and charge levied for 2008-09 are listed in Appendix 1.

(3) The report distinguishes between these rates and charges over which members can exercise their discretion and those which are laid by Parliament.

(4) The effective date, unless otherwise stated, for all proposed changes will be 1 April 2008.

Charges and Rates Payable for Children's Services

2. (1) All rates and charges proposed for 2008-9, in respect of Children's Services, are shown at Appendix 1. The basis of their proposed increase is shown throughout Section 2.

(2) Payments to Foster Carers

(a) Non-related foster carers are paid both reward and maintenance elements. Related foster carers are paid only the maintenance element.

(b) The proposal is to uplift the current reward element by a flat rate of 2.5%. The maintenance will increase in line with the national minimum fostering allowance. This will also include an additional rate for the cost of holidays, Christmas and birthdays (approximately 4 weeks of the proposed maintenance fee). This increase in the maintenance allowance and the increase for holidays is being phased in over three years. 2008-09 is the second year of this phasing. It is anticipated that at the end of the third year the increase will also include travel costs.

(c) Payments for Skills (P4S) is a fee based system for foster carers which was introduced by Kent County Council Fostering Service in April 2006 with full implementation at the end of September 2006. This is a tiered payment level recognising experienced foster carers knowledge and skills, training and development which have been clearly

evidenced and presented to an independent P4S panel. This recognises that a skilled carer workforce will help improve outcomes for looked after children. The payments will remain at the current rate.

(3) Payments to Specialist Foster Carers

- (a) Enhanced rates are paid to foster carers with specialist skills. The rates paid are mainly variations of the standard reward and maintenance rates and therefore will increase in line as described in paragraph (2)(b) above. Treatment Fostering and Remand Fostering have special rates, for these it is proposed to uplift the rates by 2.5%. The details of how each payment is made up are:
- Single placement supplements – age related maintenance allowance plus twice the age related reward payment.
 - Treatment fostering – maximum maintenance allowance plus 2.5% increase on the treatment reward payment.
 - Therapeutic fostering – maximum maintenance allowance plus twice the maximum reward payment.
 - Remand fostering retainer – 2.5% increase on the current retainer rate.
 - Remand fostering placement – retainer rate plus maximum maintenance allowance.

(4) Payments to Relative/Friend Carers

- (a) Payments to Carers approved as a relative foster carer for a looked after child are based on the standard maintenance element and will therefore increase in line with details in paragraph (2)(b).
- (b) Similarly payments for a Residence Order for non Looked After Children the allowances can vary in level and duration are based on the standard maintenance and reward elements and will therefore increase in line with details in paragraph (2)(b). Payments are reduced to take account of child benefit and they should not exceed the equivalent of the fostering maintenance level, less child benefit.

(5) Adoption Service Charges

- (a) The assessment charges for inter-country adoptions are proposed to remain the same.
- (b) The inter agency charges are set by BAAF. The 2008/09 rate is yet to be published so an estimate of the new rate is included in Appendix 1.

(6) Parental Contributions Charges

- (a) The proposal is to leave the maximum level of parental contributions unchanged.

(7) Residential Respite Services Charges

- (a) The charge relates to placements made by other local authorities or by areas above available numbers. As in 2007-08 the proposal is to charge the actual cost of the respite care.

(8) Fostering Service and other Local Authority Charges

- (a) This charge is applied when charging for Social Work Support, reviews and assessments. The proposal is to increase the charge by 2.5%.

(9) Assessment for Parental Contributions

- (a) Parents whose children are looked after or accommodated by the Authority are assessed for parental contributions. As part of the assessment deductions are made for personal allowances. These rates increase in line with income support rates set by DWP.
- (b) Allowance is also made for additional children at home. The rate is an average of the parental contributions rate and the lone parent income support rate (for under 18).
- (c) The effective date for the proposed new rate will be in line with the benefits uplift announced by the Department for Work and Pensions, 7 April 2008.

(10) Residential care, Independent Day Care & Voluntary Organisations Payments. It is proposed that:

- (a) Private and Voluntary Sector residential care, Residential Non-LAC, and Independent Sector Day Care increase by 2.76% as per Southern Region agreed price protocols.
- (b) Payment to Voluntary Organisations is increased by 2.5%.
- (c) Payment to Independent Foster Agencies (IFAs) is increased by 2.0%
- (d) Payment for home-care is increased by 2.5%

Recommendation

3. Members are requested to:

- (a) **APPROVE** the revised rates for payments to foster carers, specialist foster carers, relative/friend carers, residential care, independent day care, and voluntary organisations.
- (b) **APPROVE** the revised rate charged for residential respite services and other local authority charges.
- (c) **APPROVE** the rates and charges that have not changed: Inter-country adoption assessment charges and parental contributions.

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Background Documents:

None