

From: Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services
Matt Dunkley, CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 10 January 2020

Decision No: 20/00006

Subject: The proposal for an updated policy for Emergency Bed In house Foster Care.

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This is a proposal to increase the support package including an increase to fostering payments, specifically for Kent County Council foster carers undertaking the Emergency Bed scheme.

Recommendation: The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER, ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS** to the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services on the proposed decision to:

- a) Agree the new payment structure for in house Emergency Bed Foster Carers for immediate implementaion.
- b) 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 The attached report details the proposal for a new policy for Emergency Bed in house foster care. Following a review of the current support package and payment structure, the recommendation is for an increase in the retainer payments and the ability to pay an additional enhanced payment to emergency bed foster carers caring for our most complex young people.
- 1.2 The remit for the Emergency Foster Bed scheme is to provide a safe home for children and young people, 0-17 years old, who need an immediate place of safety at a time of crisis.

- 1.3 The report has been presented to the Directors of Integrated Children's Services at the Divisional Management Team meeting on 19th November 2019.
- 1.4 The proposed changes were agreed, with implementation planned prior to the yearly review of foster carer payments in 2020.
- 1.5 If agreed, Kent Fostering would introduce the policy with immediate effect.

2 Background

2.1 The scheme is one that provides a short-term solution for a child or young person who requires a home due to a range of circumstances that may include:

- being made subject to Police Protection.
- a family breakdown and no appropriate matched placement can be identified.
- a foster care or residential home breakdown where they cannot return to or remain in, due to the level of risk.
- A newly arrived unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person aged under 16 years old
- A young person has been arrested or has bail conditions which prevent a return to their current home.

2.2 Kent currently have 4 Foster carers providing 6 emergency bed placements between them. In launching the new policy, the plan would be to recruit an additional 4 foster carers, with a plan to have 10 emergency bed placements across the county (2 in each of our Fostering areas).

2.3 The additional support package including enhanced payments would enhance our offer and aid the recruitment to the scheme, particularly in attracting experienced foster carers to join Kent Fostering.

2.4 The scheme has been reviewed, with a recommendation to update the current policy and implement the following changes:

- Increase the current 7-day placement limit to 10 working days
- Clarify the roles within the Integrated Children Services teams to ensure accountability and ensure appropriate support for children, young people and foster carers
- Clarify processes, timescales and authorisations for specific actions
- Introduce the ability to pay an enhanced payment to emergency bed carers for our most complex children.
- Provide an updated agreement/contract to emergency bed foster carers.
- Support and enhance recruitment of foster carers to the scheme

3 Background Documents

Kent Fostering Emergency Bed Scheme Policy for Children and Young People in Care

4 Conclusion

4.1 The emergency bed scheme enables Kent Fostering to support young people at times of crisis by providing them a safe home while alternative arrangements are made for their care.

4.2 The new policy recognises that some of our young people require higher levels of support and supervision and that in paying an enhanced payment to foster carers, it will enable young people to remain within a family home, as opposed to an emergency residential provision.

8. Recommendation(s):

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