

Methodology for each proposed rate increase set out in Appendix 1.

1.1 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. The increase for 2020-21 has been set as 1.4%, reflecting the CPIH measure for 2019.

1.2 Foster Care Payments

Further details on the different types of Foster Care Payments can be found in Kent Fostering Payments Policy (Appendix 3).

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 2020-21 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.

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 above inflationary increase of +2.0%

c) Disability Enhancement

There are currently two rates:

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

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

d) Foster Care Skills Based Payments

This rate has historically been uplifted in line with the CPI rate +1.7%.

e) Foster Carer Mileage Rate

The mileage rates paid to foster carers is proposed to remain unchanged at 45p per mile in line with KCC staff.

f) Emergency Foster Carer Retainer

This rate has recently been approved at the CYPE Cabinet Committee on 10th January 2020. This rate has recently been introduced and is proposed to remain unchanged for 2020-21.

1.3 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 2020. Please note that this rate has been frozen at the 2019-20 amount.

1.4 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 2020-21 is £77.08 per hour and increase of 3.6% in line with KCC Pay Performance.

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 flat rate for 2020-21 is proposed to remain unchanged at £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.