

**Report To:** EXECUTIVE CABINET

**Date:** 29 June 2016

**Executive Reporting Officer:** **Member/** Councillor Peter Robinson, Executive Member, Children and Families  
Dominic Tumelty – Assistant Executive Director (Children’s Services)

**Subject:** FOSTER CARE PAYMENT FOR SKILLS

**Report Summary:** This report seeks approval from Cabinet for a new way in which to reward foster carers, basing the payment scheme on the skills of the carer rather than the age of the child being cared for. This will drive up the quality of care being provided to our children, provide a more transparent and equitable scheme of reward for foster carers and ensure the continuing professional development of all carers and the fostering service generally.  
This report includes a summary of the consultation which has been undertaken, analysis of the responses and a proposal.  
This report includes the table of proposed payments.  
The service has been clear from the outset that a saving of £100k is to be delivered from this scheme and other developments in the fostering service.

**Recommendations:** Cabinet is asked to approve the Payment for Skills scheme including the new payment rates to be effective for new placements made after 1 July 2016.

**Links to Community Strategy:** Tameside aspiration is for all children looked after by Tameside Council to be living with Tameside carers. This scheme will enhance the skills of current carers, therefore lessening the chance of placement breakdown whilst also enhancing the continuing professional development and training offer to all carers, attracting people to foster for Tameside.

**Policy Implications:** This payment scheme does not affect overall policy or procedure for Council services as it remains specific to the payments to foster carers.

**Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151)** Section 4 of the report provides details of the estimated financial implications of the proposed new payment for skills rates (Table 6, section 4.6 summaries the part year implications in 2016/17).  
There is a proposal to deliver £ 100,000 on an annual recurrent basis by implementing the payment for skills rates. It is estimated there will be a net saving in 2016/17 of £ 65,540 if the proposal is implemented from 1 July 2016.  
It is essential that the scheme is stringently monitored if implemented to ensure the estimated efficiency savings are delivered in 2016/17 and on a recurrent basis thereafter.

**Legal Implications:  
(Authorised by the Borough  
Solicitor)**

The Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that a sufficient number of suitable placements are available to children in care. This scheme aims to ensure that the Council retains and recruits sufficient foster carers to meet the needs of looked after children. It will encourage the development of foster carers' skills and should increase placement stability and a higher standard of care leading to better outcomes for looked after children.

The proposed scheme is controversial with a number of foster carers. However, the scheme has been revised following the consultation exercise and issues raised by the foster carers have been addressed within the report.

The proposed scheme provides a clear, transparent and equitable payment structure open to all foster carers both recruited carers and connected carers and therefore complies with previous court judgments and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010. This should therefore reduce the risk of challenge through judicial review.


The Payment for Skills scheme should be kept under review.

**Risk Management:**

The main risk would be that some carers would decide to cease fostering for Tameside MBC. Whilst this would clearly be unfortunate it is mitigated by a strong recruitment strategy, a developing professional development offer and an overall strategy of reducing the numbers of children in care.

**Access to Information:**

Background papers and information can be obtained by contacting Dominic Tumelty, Assistant Executive Director, Children's Services

 0161 342 3354

 E-mail: [dominic.tumelty@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:dominic.tumelty@tameside.gov.uk)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Historically, Tameside, like many other Local Authorities have remunerated foster carers predominantly based on the age of the child being cared for by the carer. It has been assumed that the older the child, the higher the remuneration package ought to be.
- 1.2 Payments for foster carers can appear complex. There is a central Government set national minimum rate, known as the Allowance, which is age related with additional payments which are set by Local Authorities, known as Fees, to encourage foster carers to join them rather than independent fostering agencies. The foster care receives the total of the two amounts. The current paid rates are as below;

### Foster Carer Child Allowance

Age	Weekly	Daily
0-1	119.00	17.00
2-4	122.00	17.43
5-10	134.00	19.14
11-15	154.00	22.00
16-18	179.00	25.57
DfE		

### Foster Carer Fees (Salary)

Age	Weekly	Daily
0-4	110.00	15.71
5-10	154.00	22.00
11-18	176.00	25.14
TMBC		

### Total combined allowances

Age	Weekly	Daily
0-1	229.00	32.71
2-4	232.00	33.14
5-10	288.00	41.14
11-15	330.00	47.14
16-18	355.00	50.71
DfE		

- 1.3 A number of additional allowances are also paid to foster carers as below, some of which are also the subject of review. Holiday allowances have historically been paid in full and not necessarily linked to holidays taken and this practice is changing to reflect the child's needs.

### Additional Allowances

Age	Holiday	Festival Allowance	Birthday	Initial Clothing Allowance up to
0-1	327.25	119.00	59.50	416.50
2-4	335.50	122.00	61.00	427.00
5-10	368.50	134.00	67.00	469.00
11-15	423.50	154.00	77.00	539.00
16-18	492.25	179.00	89.50	626.50

## 2. THE SCHEME AS PROPOSED

- 2.1 The document at **Appendix 1** has been presented to all foster carers as part of the consultation process. It sets out the proposed bandings, the ways in which carers would achieve that banding and the mechanism for review and development. Holiday allowances are in scope as it is proposed to bring them in line with The Fostering Network recommended rates. Birthday allowances are in scope because they are calculated as half the weekly paid rate. Other allowances remain unaltered by this proposal.

- 2.2 It is clear that the old process of paying according to age of the child is unfair. By way of examples, a baby born with foetal alcohol syndrome or withdrawing from drugs can be much more challenging than a stable long term adolescent placement; A child with complex additional needs will similarly need additional care at whatever age; An adolescent who is at high risk of sexual exploitation needs high quality, committed and well rewarded carers. They may possibly be available 24 hours limiting any other salaried employment that could be a consideration for carers for children of school age and above.
- 2.3 At **Appendix 2**, is a PowerPoint which was used at the consultation launch which aimed to set the context for the changes. Notable amongst these is that there were 30 vacancies with Tameside foster carers which were listed as being due to approval considerations, whilst 44 of our children were placed with independent fostering agencies at a cost of almost £2m.
- 2.4 At the outset of the consultation, the proposal involved a scheme whereby the payment made to foster carers would be contingent on (a) the skills of the carer and (b) the assessed complexity or otherwise of the needs of the child. It quickly became clear that to have both issues addressed would be overly bureaucratic and would fail due to the number of assessments needed with potential pit falls along the way. Instead the proposal maintained the link between payment and skills of the carer. In addition, the proposed level 5 was accepted to be unnecessary as it was a return to previous specialist fostering schemes which have failed to recruit carers.
- 2.5 It is crucial that along with the demand for carers to maintain their professional development, comes a commitment from Tameside MBC to provide the training they need to achieve that. This is inherent in the development of the fostering service.
- 2.6 The scheme as proposed links payment to the identified, assessed and current skills of foster carers. This will be a combination of formal training, experience of complex placement issues and contribution to the development of other carers via the “buddy” or “champion carer” opportunities or for newly appointed foster carers relevant pre approval experience such as social worker, mental health worker for example.

### 3. THE CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The consultation opened on the 6 November 2015 with presentations to carers over two sessions. A total of 34 foster carers attended on this date out of 255 eligible to attend. A further session was run on the 15 January, attended by 27 carers. In between these sessions there had been an open opportunity to email questions or contributions to the consultation via the Assistant Executive Director or the Commissioning Team.
- 3.2 On the 1 February, foster carers themselves arranged a further meeting and invited the Executive Member for Children and the Assistant Executive Director. 28 carers attended that meeting.
- 3.3 The GMB Union has also been party to the consultation and a summary of their views is below. It is unclear how many carers these views represent. Their questions and the Department response are below.
- 3.4 *“From the consultation documentation that has been presented to the Foster Carers the following issues need to be addressed:*
- i. **The proposed structure is complicated and confusing, there needs to be more clarity on how it will be implemented.**

This concern stemmed from the initial proposal to assess carer and child and then match the two to determine a payment. This would have been overly bureaucratic and inconsistent. Hence the decision to rely entirely on the skills of the foster carer to determine payment rates.

- ii. **One of the biggest concerns raised was the fact that the Department currently fail to provide both appropriate and quality training that is targeted to those they look after. If the Department cannot provide effective / appropriate training how do they intend providing the training to enable foster carers to be taught to meet the criteria for level 3 or/and 4? . The Department have failed to inform / make clear if they will fund this training or if carer`s will have to self-fund. Will Tameside fund this training as other authorities do? Can records of training be kept up to date and assessments happen every year?**

Whilst it is not accepted that there is a failure to provide training, it is accepted that the offer needs to improve in order that carers who wish to progress can do so. This will be via a combination of in-house training, training available through membership of the Fostering Network, regional offers and individual commissioning where appropriate.

- iii. **Will there be a right of appeal to proposed/ assessed foster carers levels. Also an agreement to backdate payments to levels that are deemed incorrect?**

The plan is that the independently chaired Fostering panel, which already has a statutory function to oversee carers annual reviews, is the body to which any appeals would be made.

- iv. **There are concerns regarding the implementation of Foster Carers completing Life Story Work and the implications that this can have on confidentiality. Do other authorities expect foster cares to do this work? What protections and support will be given to those who choose to do this work? What training will be given?**

Life Story work with children is crucial to enabling them to make sense of their history and enable them to move forward. It is often the case that those living with the children are best placed to work with them. At present such work is undertaken by Family Intervention Workers and it would be envisaged that the work can be jointly undertaken in the early stages with a gradual handover to the carer when all were comfortable with that.

- v. **What information, advice and support will be given on Child Protection issues and breach of confidentiality issues?**

This proposal does not affect in any way the duty of a carer to work within the prescribed Fostering Regulations and the statutory guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

- vi. **The cost of transport for children and the insistence that a child be transported by taxi to school, contact or other when the foster carer is happy to transport the child at a saving for the council.**

The department actively encourages carers to help with transport for children as this is clearly appropriate and efficient.

- vii. **The carers feel there is already is a lack of support from their allocated social workers. They also feel the young people are not receiving the level of support from their allocated social workers due to their high case load. What reassurance is there that they will receive the correct / appropriate level especially if caring for children / young people with complex needs (level 5)?**

Front line social work services have not reduced in size and whilst caseloads are higher than we would wish, children in our care are a clear priority. If a carer feels this not to be the case they can approach managers or advocates for the child.

- viii. **Where necessary will there be 24 hour support from CAMHS?**

The children's social care service has actively engaged with CAMHS over recent months and recently secured agreement for additional resource dedicated for children in our care.

- ix. The Biscuit Club is already in operation and should be part and parcel of the foster care scheme for Tameside. Could there be an agreement that those who are carers at present will not be worse off even with new placements?**

The Biscuit Club is an informal support group which is run by carers for carers. Whilst the department welcomes the group and many of the areas of feedback produced, it is not a formal development body which will contribute to the skills accreditation.

- x. How will this affect other allowances and payments that are available to children under the present scheme. i.e. initial clothing allowance, mileage, holiday, birthday, festival allowance, additional money for activities, if these are still available - clarity about how they will be paid and timescales to do so**

The only additional alteration is to Holiday allowance which will be brought in line with Fostering Network guidance.

- xi. The proposed expenses are not in line with what other LA's are paying their foster carers and are less than the national average."**

The fostering service has looked closely at the regional and Greater Manchester schemes. In Manchester, a level 3 carer receives between £326 and £435. The Tameside proposal sees that at £246 to £568. In Salford the scheme pays level 2 £90 and level 3 £125. In Tameside we propose level 2 would be £100 and level 3 £150.

We have also reviewed the North West picture and the conclusion is that there are few direct comparisons possible because each Council has developed its own payment scheme with different calculations used.

- 3.5 A number of elected members have been contacted by foster carers directly to voice their views on the proposed scheme.
- 3.6 The major concern throughout the proposal has been in relation to the possibility that some carers losing payment as a consequence of this scheme. There have been high expressed emotions by a highly vocal section of carers.
- 3.7 From the outset of the consultation, the Department was clear that there would be no change to payment rates for children already in placement. The new proposal was designed to be for all new placements made after an agreed date of implementation of the scheme.
- 3.8 It is unfortunate that there has been much speculation amongst carers and some members of the team about what level they may be currently functioning at.
- 3.10 It is the case that some carers will see a reduction in the overall amount of income they receive. The bulk of this is a reduction in holiday allowance. It was clear that Tameside was paying more than many other areas and as such it is proposed to adopt The Fostering Network recommended rates.

#### **4. THE PROPOSED SCHEME - FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 **Appendix 2** provides details of the proposed payment rates for new foster care placements from 1 July 2016 including the proposed skill levels payments.
- 4.2 Table 4 provides the proposed levels of government weekly child allowance payment rates which would apply to both existing and new foster care placements (based on 2015/16 weekly rates). The estimated additional cost in 2016/17 of the increase to these weekly rates is £ 62,660 based on the number of children currently placed with internal foster carers.

- 4.3 There will also be an additional cost to the level of birthday allowance payments if the weekly government allowance is increased to 2015/16 rates as the birthday allowance is paid at 50% of this rate. The estimated additional cost in 2016/17 will be £ 600.
- 4.4 It is estimated there will be an annual saving to holiday allowances paid for children in existing placements as it is proposed that the annual allowance is reduced to a payment that equates to twice the level of the government weekly child allowance payment rates. The proposed rates are stated in **Appendix 2** with existing rates within Table 5. The estimated annual saving in 2016/17 will be £ 24,000.
- 4.5. There will be estimated transitional savings delivered if the proposed scheme is implemented as existing placements are no longer placed with foster carers (paid at existing placement rates) and new placements are paid at the proposed rates in **Appendix 2**. The annual transitional saving in 2016/17 is estimated at £ 181,700, which reduces to an estimated part year saving of £ 104,800 if the implementation date is 1 July 2016.
- 4.6 The estimated additional expenditure and saving in 2016/17 is summarised in table 6 below.

**Table 6**

**Estimated Additional expenditure in 2016/17**

	<b>£</b>
Increase in government weekly child allowance rates	62,660
Increase in birthday allowance payments	600
Total	<b>63,260</b>

**Estimated Saving in 2016/17**

	<b>£</b>
Holiday allowances	24,000
Transitional savings of proposed new payment rates from 1 July 2016	104,800
Total	<b>128,800</b>

Estimated Part Year Net Saving 2016/17	<b>65,540</b>
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**5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The service has weighed up the responses from carers and wishes to thank them all for the contributions. On balance it would seem that around 15% of carers have actively engaged in the process. In response to some of the concerns raised, the proposal dropped the notion of assessing each child's needs alongside the skills of the carer as this would be overly bureaucratic and build in delay for the child and carer.
- 5.2 The service acknowledges the real concerns about financial packages, but having analysed the position has come to the conclusion that the proposal is fair and balanced.
- 5.3 The service has always committed that the training package must be available to carers in order for them to achieve their potential, that payment rates for current placements will not alter and that the appropriate forum for approval and appeal is the independently chaired Fostering panel.
- 5.4 By approving this Payment for Skills scheme, Tameside carers will be afforded the opportunity to maximise their potential and by so doing they will maximise the potential of the children in our care. They will be rewarded according to the contribution they give to the children and their peers, not just by the arbitrary age of the child they care for.

5.5 Board is asked to approve the Payment for Skills Scheme for carers and invite the Executive member for Children to review progress quarterly with Officers to ensure efficacy and appropriateness.

**6. RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 As set out on the front of the report.



# APPENDIX 1

## Foster care Payment for skills document

### **Foster Carers' Payment and Progression Scheme (Nov 2015 consultation)**

#### **The Scheme**

The Foster Carers' Payment and Progression Scheme incorporates Fostering Allowance payments to all foster carers, including mainstream and family friend carers. Tameside Council's Fostering Allowances are in line with the Government's recommended amounts. It is proposed that, all foster carers, including family and friend foster carers receive a fostering allowance and an additional skills level payment for each child placed from the outset of their fostering registration.

#### **Fostering Allowance and Payments**

The basic fostering allowance payments are designed to cover the cost of:

- Food
- Clothing, replacement due to wear and tear, out growing and school uniform
- Pocket money
- Transport
- Activities, including clubs and hobbies

As a guide, the following percentages should be used from the weekly fostering allowance payments:

- Food/household = 50%
- Clothes = 30%
- Transport = 10%
- Pocket money = 10%

#### **Basic Principles of the Scheme**

This Scheme proposes that foster carers will be eligible to progress through to Level 2, 3 and 4 after undertaking appropriate training and development. Level 5 foster carers will be expected to care for a child or young person who presently resides in a residential children's home or with non Local Authority foster carers. Level 5 foster carers will be assessed by the fostering team social worker in a report which will be considered by the fostering team manager prior to being agreed by the Head of Service for approval to be paid at Level 5.

The recommendation for adjustments to the foster carers' level will be in the form of a report completed by the fostering team social worker. The report will reflect the foster carers' training and development and good practice. In writing the report, the fostering team social worker will take care that the report addresses competencies and also any concerns that may be raised about the foster carers practice. The report will be completed with input from the foster carer and will be considered by the fostering team manager prior to being given to the IRO for consideration at the Foster Carers Review. The IRO will have the opportunity of adding comments to the report which will then be ready for submission to the next available fostering panel. Like all other reports which are submitted to fostering panel, the panel will be asked to make a recommendation in relation to the foster carers Payment Level. The Agency Decision Maker will make the final decision regarding the foster carers' Payment Level. In exceptional circumstances where the recommendation is made for the Payment Level to decrease, a period of six months will be allowed

to give the foster carer the opportunity to rectify matters that have led to the recommendation to decrease the Payment Level. The foster carer will have the right to appeal any decisions regarding their Payment Level through the departments

**Additional Allowances/amendments:**

- **Initial Clothing Allowance**

In circumstances where a child arrives with either no clothing or inadequate clothing, an emergency payment will be made in addition to the regular payments foster carers would receive for each child. Receipts of all purchases need to be kept and given to the supervising social worker on their next visit. The amount to be spent on emergency clothing should be discussed and agreed between the child's social worker and manager prior to purchase.

- **Birthday Allowance**

Birthday allowances are equivalent to half of one weeks Fostering allowance. Foster carers will be expected to be able to demonstrate that the full sum has been spent on the child's birthday.

- **Religious, Non-Religious and Humanistic Observations Allowance**

Religious festival allowance is the equivalent of one week's Fostering Allowance. Foster carers will be expected to be able to demonstrate that the full sum has been spent on the child's presents.

- **Holiday Allowances**

Holiday Allowances should remain the same as existing scheme which equates to three times the amount of the weekly Fostering Allowance and is paid once each year for each child. In addition to the annual Holiday Allowance received by foster carers for each child, additional school holidays or holidays with friends or family will be considered on an individual basis.

- **Prom Allowance**

In recent years the school prom has become a regular feature in the school calendar for young people when they approach the end of their time at school. An additional allowance of £100 is to be made available for each young person attending their school prom. This will be agreed between the child's social worker and manager.

- **Day Care and Babysitting**

Wherever possible, foster carers will be encouraged to utilise adult family or friends to provide day care and babysitting in order that children are provided with care by people known to them.

Foster carers should also explore reciprocal arrangements with other carers and this can be arranged by the Fostering Team.

- **Transport**

The Fostering Allowance contains a sum to cover the cost of transporting the child which is around 10% of the basic Fostering Allowance. In exceptional circumstances where there are demands for transport costs significantly in excess of the 10% of Fostering Allowances then an additional allowance will be considered.

- **Children with Special Needs**

The child's social worker should make sure that any relevant disability allowances are claimed. In situations where special furniture, equipment or car safety restraints are assessed as being necessary to care for the child, then the fostering service will supply these items unless they are being provided by occupational therapy or the health services.

- **School Meals**

Children in foster care are not entitled to free school meals, even if they were receiving them whilst living at home. If foster carers are receiving benefits, which entitle their own children to free school meals, those for foster children must be paid for from the weekly allowance.

- **Contact**

Where there are multiple placements or where the foster carers' own family requirements need to be considered then the placing social worker will agree with the foster carers the maximum amount of contact that the foster carer can supervise without undermining family life and routines *etc.*

- **Overpayments to Foster Carers**

All overpayments should normally be repaid in full immediately. Foster carers have a responsibility to notify their support worker or Fostering Team manager in the event of an over or underpayment.

- **Carers subject to allegations**

If a foster carer is subject to an allegation that necessitates the removal of the child to allow an investigation, the foster carer will be entitled to full payment of their Level until the investigation is complete and an outcome reached at the first fostering panel.

## **THE STRUCTURE OF THE FOSTER CARERS PAYMENT AND PROGRESSION SCHEME**

### **Level 1 (which is the equivalent of the basic Fostering allowance only)**

approximate percentage carers should be spending on Food (50%), clothing (30%), transport (10%) and pocket money (10%).

### **Level 2**

All new foster carers who have attended the Skills to Foster training and have completed a **competency matrix** will start their Fostering career at Level 2 and will be expected to complete the CWDC training and development standards for foster carers. They will also be expected to complete the following mandatory training during their first year of Fostering:

First Aid

Behaviour Management (Positive Options)

Basic Essential Training Award (BETA)

This includes:

- Theories of attachment, separation and loss
- Child Development
- Safer Caring
- Life Story work

Additional non-mandatory training is offered throughout the year which includes Diploma in Childcare Level 3. On-line training is also available in key areas.

The foster carers' annual review will confirm that carers have completed the expected training and that they have worked appropriately with the Department and have demonstrated that they have supported foster children to achieve positive results against the five outcomes. We will replace 'economic wellbeing' with 'positive progression to adult hood.' Foster carers will be expected to encourage children to engage in having a voice, for example, encourage children to complete consultation documents, attend groups for children looked after and encourage children generally to give a view of the service.

### **Minimum Skills required for all those approved as Foster Carers**

#### **General:**

- healthy, emotional, physical and sexual development as well as their health and educational achievement.
- An ability to work closely with children's families, and others who are important to the child, in a non-judgemental way.
- An ability to set up appropriate boundaries, and manage children's behaviour within these, without the use of physical or inappropriate punishment.
- Knowledge of normal child development and an ability to listen and communicate with children appropriate to their age and understanding.

### **Providing a safe and caring environment:**

- An ability to ensure that the children are cared for in a home where they are safe from harm or abuse.
- An ability to help children keep themselves safe from harm or abuse, and to know how to seek help if their safety is threatened.

### **Working as part of a team:**

- An ability to work with other professional people and contribute to the department's planning for the child/young person.
- An ability to communicate effectively.
- An ability to keep information confidential.
- An ability to promote equality, diversity and the rights of individuals and groups within society.

### **Own development**

- An ability to appreciate how personal experiences have affected themselves and their families, and how the impact that fostering is likely to have on them all.
- An ability to have links within the community, which provide support.
- An ability to use training opportunities and to improve skills.
- An ability to sustain positive relationships and maintain effective functioning through periods of stress.

### **Level 3**

Level 3 Foster carers will meet all the relevant criteria for Level 2 and will, in addition, have successfully completed a further 15 hours of training.

### **Foster Carers must also provide evidence of the following Key Skills:**

- An ability to help children develop appropriate social behaviour, helping them to become more independent, and enabling them to cope with their emotions as appropriate to their age and ability.
- An ability to assist children in developing basic aspects of memory, thinking, imagination and manipulative skills through play etc.
- An ability to help children develop their language skills and general self-expression.
- An ability to help children learn the boundaries of acceptable behaviour without resorting to physical punishment, and within the requirements of current policy, handle children's negative reactions and unacceptable behaviour, and encourage positive behaviour patterns.

- An ability to plan for and provide an appropriate routine for children which balances the child's needs, including those of play and learning, and gives goals which can be achieved in measuring the child's level of understanding development.
- An ability to observe and respond appropriately to the possibility of child abuse and neglect.
- An ability to challenge appropriately, to ensure that Foster Care practice is anti-discriminatory and respects all children and their families.
- An ability to advocate on behalf of children.
- An ability to help children and families with loss and bereavement – this may be because of life threatening illness, separation through adoption or loss of their family.
- An ability to work closely with other professionals in carrying out individual therapeutic programmes, and working under guidance of, or in collaboration with, other professionals with the child.

**Please note:** There is no expectation that a carer would undertake all these tasks at the same time. They will however, need to demonstrate their ability to undertake them and be available and willing to do so depending on the demands of individual placements.

#### Level 4

Carers at Level 4 will usually care for Secondary School age children. Carers at this Level will be expected to complete a minimum of 15 hours training in their first year at this Level.

There may be a place for people with a relevant qualification to enter this grade immediately if they can prove that they have appropriate qualifications and working child care experience such as applicants with a minimum of two years experience of working within an OFSTED regulated environment.

All Level 4 foster carers must meet the requirements as set out in Level 2 and 3 skill profiles. In addition they should be able to offer the following, of which criteria 1-4 are core, two of the remaining five must also be demonstrated.

1. Have proven relevant child care experience **or** have a professional qualification which is appropriate to the care of children, and usually have worked for a number of years in this profession.
2. Be able to demonstrate ability to positively care for children who are presenting with a high level of behavioural issues.
3. Maintain an awareness and knowledge of current legislation and current issues in child care and good practice.
4. An ability to take responsibility for individual programmes of skills development for children, and work with them and their parents and other professionals to achieve the goals of the programmes.
5. Be able, in conjunction with the agency, to take a key role in training other carers.
6. Be able to offer support to carers on a formal basis e.g. mentoring.
7. Have the ability, and willingness to supervise those contact visits, where it is not deemed safe or desirable for contact to occur without a third party, and where it cannot happen in the child's current placement.
8. Take responsibility for seeking out training appropriate for own needs.
9. Have ability and willingness to take part in events to promote the Fostering Service.

There is no expectation that carers would undertake all these tasks at the same time. They will, however, have to demonstrate their ability to undertake them and be available and willing to do so depending upon the demands of placements. If the Fostering Service is not using a particular carer's skills this does not signify that the carer should lose the skills payment. It is the agency's responsibility to use carer's skills appropriately.

## **Level 5**

Level 5 foster carers will be expected to care for children and young people who might have previously been cared for in a residential or non-local authority foster placement and where it is likely that they will have complex needs and have suffered multiple moves.

Carers at Level 5 will have also demonstrated that they meet all the requirements under Level 4.

Foster carers who take on these roles will be expected to commit to the placement until the child or young person moves into independence or remains until adulthood.

The child or young person must have their own room and carers will be expected to undertake all transport requirements whether to contact, medical appointments, school, college or work.

## APPENDIX 2

### Proposed payment rates

#### Proposed Foster Care Fee Structure

Age	Foster Carer Child Allowance Rates	Level 1 Skills Funding	Holiday	Birthday	Festival Allowance	Total Per Annum per Child
0-1	123.00		246.00	61.50	123.00	6,826.50
2-4	126.00		252.00	63.00	126.00	6,993.00
5-10	139.00		278.00	69.50	139.00	7,714.50
11-15	159.00		318.00	79.50	159.00	8,824.50
16-18	185.00		370.00	92.50	185.00	10,267.50

Age	Foster Carer Child Allowance Rates	Level 2 Skills Funding	Holiday	Birthday	Festival Allowance	Total Per Annum per Child
0-1	123.00	100.00	246.00	61.50	123.00	12,026.50
2-4	126.00	100.00	252.00	63.00	126.00	12,193.00
5-10	139.00	100.00	278.00	69.50	139.00	12,914.50
11-15	159.00	100.00	318.00	79.50	159.00	14,024.50
16-18	185.00	100.00	370.00	92.50	185.00	15,467.50

Age	Foster Carer Child Allowance Rates	Level 3 Skills Funding	Holiday	Birthday	Festival Allowance	Total Per Annum per Child
0-1	123.00	150.00	246.00	61.50	123.00	14,626.50
2-4	126.00	150.00	252.00	63.00	126.00	14,793.00
5-10	139.00	150.00	278.00	69.50	139.00	15,514.50
11-15	159.00	150.00	318.00	79.50	159.00	16,624.50
16-18	185.00	150.00	370.00	92.50	185.00	18,067.50

Age	Foster Carer Child Allowance Rates	Level 4 Skills Funding	Holiday	Birthday	Festival Allowance	Total Per Annum per Child
0-1	123.00	250.00	246.00	61.50	123.00	19,826.50
2-4	126.00	250.00	252.00	63.00	126.00	19,993.00
5-10	139.00	250.00	278.00	69.50	139.00	20,714.50
11-15	159.00	300.00	318.00	79.50	159.00	24,424.50
16-18	185.00	300.00	370.00	92.50	185.00	25,867.50

**This table is based on:**

Foster Carer Child Allowance Rates - on National Minimum government current guidelines  
 Holiday Allowance - At Foster Carer Child Allowance per week \*



Birthday Allowance - At Foster Carer Child Allowance \* 1/2  
Festival Allowance - At Foster Carer Child Allowance per week  
Level 4 Skill Funding Payment of £200 Age 0-10, £300 Age 11+

## APPENDIX 3

PowerPoint launch of the consultation

# Consultation Opening Foster Care Approvals

Dominic Tumelty  
Assistant Exec.  
Director



## Purpose



- Tameside children with Tameside carers
- Open a dialogue to discuss a new way of matching children to carers
- Associated payment scheme matches fees to needs
- New review and appraisal process
- Opportunity for Champions and Mentors

## The Context



Total Number of LAC at Quarter End.	417	426	421
LAC Placed In Residential	63	59	54
Of the above, LAC Placed In Residential OOB	34	31	26
LAC Placed In YOI, Prison or Secure Unit	2	0	3
LAC Placed In Semi Independent Living	3	0	0
LAC Placed In Independent Living	2	8	15
LAC Supported Lodgings	0	2	2
LAC Placed for Adoption (with Adoptive Family)	12	14	11
LAC Placed with Parents	46	46	44
LAC Placed In Foster Care	289	297	292
LAC Placed In Foster Care those OOB	82	86	84
LAC Placed In Foster Care In-Borough	207	211	208
% New LAC placed 20+ miles from home	4% (4)	6.5% (2)	6.1% (3)
LAC with 3+ placements during the year.	41 (9.8%)	10 (2.3%)	20 (4.8%)

## The context



• Number of Approved Places	337
• Children in these placements	269
• Number of Vacancies	17
• Vacancies due to matching considerations	21
• Vacancies due to foster care approval considerations	30



## Context

Cost Centre	Account Code	Type	Current Number	Projected Cost as as 28/09/2015
SN213500	R5432	External Fostering	44	£1,945,820
SN213500	R5441	External Residential	47	£5,381,030
SN250100	R5937	16+ Placements	18	£987,160
				£8,314,010

Looked after  
Children

## The consultation

- Is change required ?
- What do you think of the proposals?
- Strengths, Gaps, Concerns
- Alternative ideas to consider

Tameside  
children living in  
Tameside

Flexible and  
wide ranging  
approvals

Fostering for  
Adoption

Mentors and  
Champions

More timely  
reviews

Staying Put

## Next Steps

- 12 week consultation, likely to include further meetings / workshops if helpful
- Findings considered and presented to Executive Board, chaired by Leader of the Council in early 2016
- Implementation of any new arrangements March 2016
  - Contributions to;
- [Nick.ellwood@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:Nick.ellwood@tameside.gov.uk)
  - or
- your supervising social worker



# Foster Care Approval and Payment Consultation

## This morning

- Brief recap
- Table discussion
- Break
- Feedback

## The Team around our children



## A recap

- First stage is looking at the idea **in principle**
- Most feedback suggests change is required to approval processes
- Clear refresh of the relationship between carers and council is needed
- Detail of precise finances requested





## The context



- Children in our placements 269
- Number of Vacancies 21
- Vacancies due to matching considerations 11
- Vacancies due to foster care approval considerations 30 + 11

## Context

Cost Centre	Account Code	Type	Current Number	Projected Cost as as 28/09/2015
SN213500	R5432	External Fostering	44	£1,945,820
SN213500	R5441	External Residential	47	£5,381,030
SN250100	R5937	16+ Placements	18	£987,160
				£8,314,010

**Looked after  
Children**

## Our Children in Our Care

- We need a Shared Aspiration for Success
- Positive Recruitment strategy
- Staying Put Policy approved by Cabinet, subject to this consultation
- Regional Adoption Agency will impact

## Profile of our Children

### Dec 14 ( total 408 )

- Aged under 1 16
- Aged 1-9 140
- Aged 10-15 176
- Aged 16+ 76

### Dec 15 ( total 421 )

- 21
- 142
- 176
- 82

## Proposal for 0-18 approvals

Level one	Connected person	Have some experience of childcare e.g. parenting / looking after other's children or knowing other children as relatives / connected (e.g. Kinship Care situations)
Level two	Child attends mainstream school, few additional needs	Have been an approved carer for at least 6 months and met the requirements of a Progression Plan evidenced through a portfolio.
Level three	Child has additional needs e.g. education / health / CAMHS	Have been an approved carer for at least 2 years (1 year if a Short Breaks carer) and met the requirements of a Progression Plan evidenced through a portfolio
Level four	Child has complex identified needs	Significant formal childcare experience with a minimum of 3 years previous fostering experience including children with complex needs

## Some key points

- No change to existing placements rates
- New rates only to apply following an annual review being agreed by panel
- Foster care level determined at panel, evidence based and by annual review with an appeals process built in
- More children placed with Tameside Carers



## Next Steps

- Decision made 16 March for implementation with effect from new placements made after March 31
- Final papers will therefore be needed for end February
- Finance rates to be resolved by Jan 29<sup>th</sup> and sent out to all carers
- Written feedback welcome

## Your thoughts

- As a key partner, what does a foster carer need from the Council within the current climate?
- How can foster carers best contribute to service improvement?
- Views on the principle of the approval issues
  - **0-18 approvals?**
  - **Based on foster carer skills**
  - **Or child's needs**
  - **Or a combination of both**