

# Report to Cabinet Member for Children's Services

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**Decision to be taken on or after 11 June 2019**

**Decision can normally be implemented at least  
3 working days after decision has been signed.**

**Cabinet Member Report No. CS03.19**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Staying put policy update</b>
<b>Date:</b>	3 June 2019
<b>Author:</b>	Nathan Whitley, Head of Children's Care Service
<b>Contact officer:</b>	Nathan Whitley 01296 382303
<b>Local members affected:</b>	All

*For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444*

## Summary

A staying put arrangement refers to the situation when a young person, who has been looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, remains living with the foster carer with whom they were placed when they turned 18. It is an arrangement based upon both parties (young person and the foster carer), expressing the wish to enter into such an arrangement when a young person becomes 18.

Each Local Authority is required to have their own Staying Put Policy, which sets out the arrangements whereby the authority can fulfil their duty to facilitate and support young people to remain with their former foster carers from the age of 18, where this is the wish of both the young person and the foster carer. This policy updates the one published in 2017 to bring the policy up to date and in-line with other policies which apply to these young people.

A staying put arrangement is governed by the legislation for care leavers statutory guidance rather than the fostering services regulations. Staying Put is designed to improve the support and transition into adulthood for young people in care by allowing them to remain with their

foster carers beyond the age of 18. There is an emphasis on a more gradual approach to planning transition to adulthood.

## **Recommendation**

**To APPROVE the updated Staying Put Policy, amendments include:**

- **Updating of payment amounts to align with current fostering payments**
- **Clarification of areas covered by the staying put allowance**
- **Clarification of payments for placements where the young person is at university**

### **A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision**

1. In May 2014 a Legal Duty was placed upon all Local Authorities to advise, assist and support both the young person and their former foster carers when they wish to stay living together after the 'former relevant child' reaches their 18th birthday. This Duty requires every Local Authority in England to facilitate, monitor and support young people until they reach the age of 21. Eligibility is restricted to young people who are:
  - Looked after by a local authority.
  - Have been looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks since the age of 14.
  - The young person's pathway plan indicates Staying Put as the appropriate plan
  - Placed with a foster carer on their 18th birthday
2. The aim of Staying Put is to:
  - Ensure that young people can experience a transition to adulthood similar to that of their peers, within a supportive family environment;
  - Ensure that young people are not obliged to leave their former foster family before they feel ready to move into greater independence;
  - Help care leavers to maximise opportunities for education, employment or training;
  - Reduce the likelihood of periods of homelessness;
  - Ensure that care leavers develop the necessary emotional and practical skills before they are required to live independently;
  - Reduce the likelihood of social exclusion.

### **B. Other options available, and their pros and cons**

3. The Local Authority has a Legal Duty to advise, assist and support both the young person and their former foster carers when they wish to stay living together after the 'former relevant child' reaches their 18th birthday.

### **C. Resource implications**

4. This policy brings the payments to staying put carers in line with our fostering payments, as required within the legislation. The costs identified will be contained within the existing budget.

### **D. Value for Money (VfM) Self Assessment**

5. We have a duty to support young people who were previously looked after once they reach their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Staying put is has a comparatively lower cost to the authority than other options for example a semi-independent living provision and also helps provide ongoing stability for the young person as they reach adulthood.

**E. Legal implications**

6. By promoting and supporting Staying Put, the Local Authority will be fulfilling its statutory duty. There are no other legal implications.

**F. Property implications**

7. None

**G. Unitary Council**

8. None

**H. Other implications/issues**

9. None

**I. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views**

10. The Staying Put Strategy is a county wide plan; therefore local Member consultation is not applicable. The policy has been developed in consultation with Foster Carers and wider social work teams to ensure relevant stakeholder views are taken fully into account.

**J. Communication issues**

11. If this policy is agreed, the updates will be communicated to involved social work teams/ services, Foster Carers and young people.

**K. Progress Monitoring**

12. Regular monthly reporting of foster care placements and care leavers are produced and monitored via the Senior Management Team. Regular reports are also made to County Council via the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

**L. Review**

13. The policy forming part of this decision will be reviewed after 3 years or sooner, if legislation changes.

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**Background Papers**

n/a

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***Your questions and views***

*If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.*

*If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on 10 June 2019. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to [democracy@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckscc.gov.uk)*