

Buckinghamshire County Council
Financial support for Adoption,
Special Guardians and
Child Arrangement
Orders Policy

June 2019



*Together... Keeping
Children Safe*

Contents

SECTION A: ADOPTION FINANCIAL SUPPORT	3
RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE	3
1. INTRODUCTION AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL POLICY.....	3
2. PRINCIPLES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT	4
3. CHILDREN LIVING OUTSIDE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	5
4. TYPES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT	5
5. FOSTER CARERS BECOMING ADOPTERS	6
6. ENDING OF THE ADOPTION ALLOWANCE	7
SECTION B: SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP - FINANCIAL SUPPORT.....	8
RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE	8
1. INTRODUCTION.....	8
2. PRINCIPLES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT	9
3. FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT ELIGIBILITY	10
4. FORMER FOSTER CARERS WHO BECOME SPECIAL GUARDIANS.....	10
5. SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP FINANCIAL SUPPORT SCHEME	11
6. ENDING OF SGO ALLOWANCE	13
SECTION C: CHILD ARRANGEMENT ORDERS - FINANCIAL SUPPORT	15
RELEVANT LEGISLATION	15
1. INTRODUCTION.....	15
2. FINANCIAL SUPPORT.....	15
3. FORMER FOSTER CARERS:	17
4. ENDING OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT	17
APPENDICES.....	19
APPENDIX 1 – Means test.....	19
APPENDIX 2 – Adoption assessment request form	23
APPENDIX 3 – SGO/CAO Financial assessment referral form	26
APPENDIX 4 – Notification to carer of payment template	27
APPENDIX 5 – Annual review template	29

This policy describes the approach to financial support for Adopters, special guardians and those with a Child Arrangement Order in Buckinghamshire in accordance with associated legislation, guidance and regulations.

The policy sets out the circumstances in which financial support will be considered for Adopters, Special Guardians, and carers with a Child Arrangement Order and how these will be assessed and reviewed.

Section A: Adoption financial support

This section details the principles and criteria for financial support to be provided to prospective adopters and adopters, including former foster carers who have adopted their former foster child.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

- a) Adoption and Children Act 2002;
- b) Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005;
- c) Adoption and Children Act 2002 Guidance 2011, Chapter 9;
- d) Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011, Standard 15;
- e) Practice Guidance on Assessing the Support Needs of Adoptive Families (2008).

1. INTRODUCTION AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL POLICY

Buckinghamshire County Council strongly supports adoption as a means of achieving permanent stable care for children and young people. Adoption provides a loving for ever family for children who would otherwise have grown up in the state care system.

Early adoption is critical in helping children to achieve positive outcomes and to improve their life chances. The likelihood of adoption breakdown increases the older a child is when placed.

Where an adoption order is made, parental responsibility is given exclusively to the adopters and the adopters become responsible for maintaining the child. The adoptive parents are treated in law as if the child had been born to them. Adoption orders last for life except in very exceptional circumstances.

The court must consider arrangements for contact before making an adoption order. The court has power to make a Contact Order under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 but it is unusual for this to happen against the adopters wishes. More often arrangements for contact, whether direct or indirect, are made with the help of the agency before the adoption order is made. Adoption Support Services must be in place.

The principle that underpins the Regulations around financial support, and therefore Buckinghamshire County Council's Adoption Allowance Scheme, is that financial barriers should never be the sole reason for an adoptive placement not being set up, or failing to survive.

Financial support may therefore be payable to help secure a suitable adoptive placement where the circumstances of the placement justify the payment of an allowance and where the arrangement cannot otherwise be readily made because of a financial obstacle. Financial support may also be available if the continuation of an otherwise successful adoptive placement might otherwise be under threat.

2. PRINCIPLES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to provide adoption support services for adoptive families regardless of whether the placement has been made by a local authority or an agency. Financial support is payable to an adoptive parent for the purposes of supporting the placement of the adoptive child or the continuation of adoption arrangements after an adoption order is made. Section 8 of the Adoption Support Regulations 2005 provides that financial support may be provided to an adoptive parent(s) in the following circumstances:

- Where it is necessary to ensure that the adoptive parent can look after the child;
- Where the child needs special care which requires greater expenditure of resources by reason of illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the continuing consequences of post abuse or neglect;
- Where it is necessary for the local authority to make any special arrangements to facilitate the placement or the adoption by reason of the age or ethnic origin of the child or;

- The desirability of the child being placed with the same adoptive parent as his brother or sister (whether of full or half-blood) or with a child with whom he previously shared a home. Where the local authority consider it appropriate to make a contribution to meet the following kinds of expenditure;
- Expenditure on legal costs, including fees payable to a court in relation to an adoption;
- Expenditure for the purpose of introducing an adoptive child to his adoptive parent;
- Expenditure necessary for the purpose of accommodating the child, including the provision of furniture and domestic equipment, provision key items necessary for the purpose of looking after the child and in rare circumstances alterations to and adaptations of the home.

The Adoption Allowance, if agreed, will be dependent on an assessment which has considered:

- a) The age of the child
- b) The needs of the child
- c) The circumstances of the placement and / or the financial circumstances of the adoptive parent(s)

3. CHILDREN LIVING OUTSIDE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Where a child is placed or subsequently moves out of Buckinghamshire, any existing commitments will continue to be funded. Any new request for adoption support (including financial support) which is made more than 3 years after the making of the adoption order is the responsibility of the receiving local authority.

4. TYPES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

One off payments

Contribution to a settling in grant may be awarded following an assessment of the needs of the child. This grant will not be paid if the child was in foster care and the foster carers have applied to adopt the child, unless there are exceptional circumstances which would justify such a grant being made. Where awarded the grant is paid up to a maximum of £350 per child. This may be exceeded in exceptional cases.

Expenses to Facilitate Contact Arrangements

Adopted children may need to maintain face-to-face contact with important people from their past, such as birth relatives. Where this contact includes significant travel and other costs, financial assistance may be given. Adoptive families who have to make a round trip of 80 miles or more will be able to claim for the following, using the appropriate form and on production of the necessary receipts. If the round trip is less than 80 miles, but the adopters are likely to suffer financial hardship if having to meet this cost themselves, the Head of Service (Children's Care Service) may authorise financial assistance.

Exceptional payments

If you incur exceptional one-off costs which are not covered above, application can be made to the authority to cover these and the decision will be taken by the Head of Service (Children's Care Services) on whether to grant additional payment.

Ongoing maintenance allowance

Any allowance made will be subject to means testing and an annual assessment by the Local Authority. Payment in respect of a child's special needs will be subject to a full assessment of the child's needs and the adoptive family's financial circumstances.

The Local Authority will use a Means Test (See appendix 1) to assess eligibility for allowances in all circumstances in which it is required, or decides, to means test in respect of Adopters financial support applications, and to calculate the proportion of the full allowance payable (on a sliding scale according to the adoptive family's means). Maximum payments are based on 100% of fostering allowances at the time of the granting of the order (see [here](#) for allowance rates as at April 2019) and are age-banded. Allowances paid will be subject to deduction of benefits which the adopter can claim in respect of the child such as child benefit, tax credits etc.

Eligibility for the allowance, and the proportion payable to a particular adopter, are subject to review every year to take account of both the changing needs and circumstances of the child and adopter. The Means test will be applied annually or on receipt of notification of a change in circumstances prior to the annual review.

Action for assessing social workers requesting assessment for a maintenance allowance:

Complete form in Appendix 2. This form must be signed by the Adoption Team Manager.

Following completion of the means tested allowance assessment, recommendation of the allowance amount will be sent to the Head of Service (Children's Care Service) for approval.

Once approved, the financial support agreed will constitute part of the Adoption Support Plan.

The Finance Team will also inform the applicants of the outcome directly. This notification must include:

- The amount of financial support;
- The frequency and method of payment;
- The period for which the financial support will be paid;
- The date when payments will start.

5. FOSTER CARERS BECOMING ADOPTERS

Financial support cannot normally include remuneration to the adoptive parent. However, where the child is adopted by former foster carers the local authority may continue to remunerate the adopters at the same rate less child benefit payments for the first two years, or, longer in exceptional cases. Exceptional cases could include 'hard to place' children, including sibling groups; children over the age of five years; with a disability or who have other special needs. The expectation would be that the department has actively sought an adoptive family for six months or more and all other measures have been exhausted. In some of these cases, at the discretion of the Director or delegated officer, the need for a financial assessment may be waived and a decision made at the time placement about the level of payment and length of time any agreed allowance will be paid at a specific rate.

As noted above, financial support cannot normally include financial remuneration to an adoptive parent. The introduction of regulation 25A from 1st July 2013 in the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 (CPPCR 2010) however enables approved

adopters to be temporarily approved as foster carers for a named child by the local authority responsible for the child.

Where a child is placed under these arrangements, a Fostering Allowance may be paid at the usual fostering rate for that child. This would be discussed with the foster carers and agreed by the Head of Service. Following the formal matching process and Agency Decision Maker's Decision the child will become 'placed for adoption' on an agreed date. The adoptive parent will no longer receive a fostering allowance but will be considered for an adoption allowance.

6. ENDING OF THE ADOPTION ALLOWANCE

Payment of the adoption allowance will end in the following circumstances:

- a) If the adopters' income rises above the level at which they qualify. (They can ask for a review if this changes);
- b) If the child ceases to have a regular home with the adopters;
- c) When the child reaches the age of 18, unless continuing in full time education. In this situation, financial support will be adjusted to take into account any income or benefits the child receives;
- d) When the child starts work, qualifies for a place on a Government Training Scheme, or qualifies for benefits in their own right.

Payment of ongoing financial support is dependent on the adopter or prospective adopter agreeing to inform the local authority if any of the above circumstances occurs.

Section B: Special guardianship - Financial support

This section describes the circumstances in which financial support may be available to Special Guardians and the process to be followed where financial support is provided.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Sections 14A-F of the Children Act 1989 (inserted by Section 115(1) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002)

Special Guardianship Regulations 2005

Special Guardianship Guidance

1. INTRODUCTION

The special guardian will have clear responsibility for the day-to day decisions about caring for the child or young person and his or her upbringing. In all cases where a SGO is made, the applicant acquires parental responsibility. Any child previously looked after will cease to be looked after on the making of this order. A special guardian may exercise PR to the exclusion of all others with parental responsibility apart from another special guardian. A special guardian can also appoint a guardian in the event of their death. Special guardians cannot change the child's surname or move to live abroad for more than 3 months without the agreement of all others with parental responsibility or leave of the court. Special guardians cannot consent to the adoption of the child.

Under a SGO the child's birth parents legally remain the parents and retain parental responsibility, though their ability to exercise this is limited. The special guardian would have to seek the agreement of the parents if they wished to change the child's surname or live abroad for more than 3 months but they also have the option of applying to the court for permission if the parents do not consent. The parents also retain the right to consent or not to adoption.

For a child who is subject to a SGO it is likely that there will be more face-to-face contact than where a child has been adopted and parents may apply through the courts for contact with the child or for a variation of the SGO.

SGOs last until the child is 18. The child's needs at the time of the making of the order and in the future must be considered. For a child who is subject to a SGO it is likely that there will be more face to face contact than where a child has been adopted. The child's parents are able to apply for a contact order under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Special Guardianship support services must be in place.

The Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 and the DfES guidance to the Regulations, supported by the guidance, govern the processes by which local authorities exercise their discretion in determining requests for Special Guardianship support services, including financial support. Regulations state that financial support should be provided where this is necessary to ensure that the arrangements for a SGO can be secured. Financial support should not be the sole reason for a Special Guardianship Arrangement failing to survive. This applies to both looked and non-looked after children.

Carers who are proposing to care for a child under a SGO or who are caring for a child under a SGO can request an assessment for support, including financial support, under the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005.

2. PRINCIPLES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

According to Regulation 6 of the 2005 Regulations, financial support may be paid to a special guardian or prospective special guardian:

- to facilitate arrangements for a person to become the special guardian of a child where the local authority consider such arrangements to be beneficial to the child's welfare; or
- to support the continuation of such arrangements after a SGO is made.

It is important that special guardians are helped to access benefits to which they are entitled including tax credits and social security benefits. Financial support paid by the local authority cannot duplicate any other payment available to the (prospective) special guardian. Allowances and grants are paid for the child. Any extra payments are to cover the specific needs of the child e.g. for protection, safety etc. It is important to ensure that families are assisted in accessing mainstream services. There is a requirement for carers to complete and supply the local authority with an annual statement of their financial

circumstances, the financial needs and resources of the child, their address and whether the child still has a home with him and this will apply in all cases.

Financial support is payable only in the following circumstances:

- where the Local Authority consider that it is necessary to ensure that the special guardian or prospective special guardian can look after the child;
- where the Local Authority consider that the child needs special care which requires a greater expenditure of resources than would otherwise be the case because of his illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the consequences of his past abuse or neglect;
- where the Local Authority consider that it is appropriate to contribute to any legal costs, including court fees, of a special guardian or prospective special guardian, as the case may be, associated with; the making of a SGO or any application to vary or discharge such an order;
- an application for an order under section 8 of the Act;
- an order for financial provision to be made to or for the benefit of the child.

The Regulations further determine that where the local authority consider that it is appropriate it should contribute to the expenditure necessary for the purposes of accommodating and maintaining the child, including the provision of furniture and domestic equipment, alterations to and adaptations of the home, provision of means of transport and provision of clothing, toys and other items necessary for the purpose of looking after the child.

3. FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT ELIGIBILITY

If a request for financial assistance is made by a prospective special guardian of a child who is looked after by the Local Authority or a special guardian of a child who was looked after immediately before the making of the SGO, (or such child or the child's parents) then an assessment will be carried out (This is required by Regulation 11(1) of the 2005 Regulations).

Requests for financial support from other persons will be considered, but unless there are exceptional circumstances, a financial assessment, including a means test, will not be

conducted. It is not possible to specify circumstances which might be regarded as exceptional because case by case consideration is required. However, if for example the Local Authority is satisfied, having regard to its history of involvement with the child, that the child would (on the balance of probabilities) have become looked after had the special guardian not stepped in to care for them, the Local Authority might consider this as an exceptional circumstance warranting a financial assessment for support. In these circumstances consideration of financial support will be on the assessed needs of the child under regulation 12 and consideration that the award is necessary to ensure that the special guardian can look after the child.

In the event that the Local Authority decides not to conduct a financial assessment, it will notify the applicant of the reasons for the decision and allow him/ her a reasonable period within which to make representations, which will then be considered. Following any representation, a final decision will be made, and the applicant notified of it, within 28 days.

Financial support can be considered for Buckinghamshire children who are to be, or have been, placed with special guardians living within the county. If special guardians live outside Buckinghamshire, financial support can only be provided if the children concerned are or were looked after by Buckinghamshire. If this is not the case Special Guardians should request an assessment for financial support from the local authority in whose area they live.

4. FORMER FOSTER CARERS WHO BECOME SPECIAL GUARDIANS

It is recognised that a foster carer may be able to provide permanency which is in a child's best interests, but feel deterred from applying for Special Guardianship because of the loss of the fostering allowance and any reward (fee) being paid in respect of the child. The local authority will seek to address this concern by ensuring, consistently with paragraph 43 of the Guidance that a former foster carer has a period of financial stability upon becoming special guardian to a former foster child.

Foster carers who were in receipt of a fostering allowance and skills element, who become special guardians to the previously fostered child, will continue to receive their current fostering allowance element as part of the Special Guardianship Allowance in order to maintain their level of income after the order is made for two years after which point the allowance will be subject to a Means Test.

Allowances paid will be subject to deduction of benefits which the former foster carer can, as a special guardian, claim in respect of the child such as child benefit, tax credits etc.

Where the foster carer was approved by an Independent Fostering Provider, the allowance and fee payment may be negotiated individually as there may be significant disparity between the allowance and fee paid to a Local Authority foster carer and that which has been received from an Independent Fostering Provider. The allowance includes payment for birthdays, festivals, holidays and school uniform and separate additional payments in respect of these items will not be made.

5. SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP FINANCIAL SUPPORT SCHEME

One off payments

Contribution to a settling in grant may be awarded following an assessment of the needs of the child. This grant will not be paid if the child was in foster care and the foster carers have applied to be that child's special guardians, unless there are exceptional circumstances which would justify such a grant being made. Where awarded the grant is paid up to a maximum of £500 per child. This may be exceeded in exceptional cases.

Legal fees

You will be provided with details of financial support available for one-off legal advice by the child's social worker, where the Local Authority supports the making of the SGO.

Legal fees for representation in court to make an application for a SGO will only be paid where:

- the application relates to a child who is Looked After or who was looked after prior to being cared for by the prospective special guardian, or would have been had the special guardian not stepped in; and
- the Local Authority supports the application; and
- the Local Authority considers that the prospective special guardian requires separate representation; and
- the prospective special guardian is not eligible for public funding or any other financial assistance for example under an insurance policy;

and

- the Local Authority considers that the prospective special guardian's financial circumstances are such that it would not be reasonable to expect him/ her to pay his/her own fees. As above, the solicitor instructed should be a member of the Law Society's Children Panel. Itemised bills will be required.

Advice and representation for applications to be made for orders to protect the child (e.g. non-molestation orders and prohibited steps orders during the currency of a SGO) will be subject to the criteria listed above and the Local Authority's assessment of the merits of the case. Non-periodic financial support may, where it is considered appropriate by the Local Authority, be paid without an assessment of the means of the special guardian (and/ or child).

Contact expenses

It is recognised that there may be a need for contact to be maintained between the child and his/her birth family or other persons after the SGO is made. The principle employed by the Local Authority is that the special guardian is expected to be able to manage contact themselves or is working towards taking responsibility for this within a reasonable timeframe. The Local Authority may, however, where it considers appropriate, make payment of contact expenses. The payment of expenses in respect of contact will be based on an assessment of the child's needs, the circumstances of the individuals involved and the nature of the contact arrangements. Such support, when agreed, must be recorded in the Special Guardianship support plan and is subject to annual review. If contact supervision is needed, this should be based on a risk assessment.

Exceptional payments

If you incur exceptional one-off costs which are not covered above, application can be made to the authority to cover these and the decision will be taken by the Head of Service (Children's Care Services) on whether to grant additional payment.

Ongoing allowances

Special Guardianship financial support is payable to the special guardian to care for the child and meet his/her assessed needs.

Payment in respect of a child's special needs will be subject to a full assessment of the child's needs and the special guardian's financial. Any allowance made will be subject to means testing and an annual assessment by the Local Authority. The Local Authority has a discretion not to means test in relation to a former looked after child who needs special care which requires a greater expenditure of resources than would otherwise be the case because of his illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the consequences of past abuse or neglect (see Reg.6(2)(b) read together with Reg.13(5)(a)(iii)).

The Local Authority will use a Means Test (See appendix 1) to assess eligibility for allowances in all circumstances in which it is required, or decides, to means test in respect of Special Guardianship financial support applications, and to calculate the proportion of the full allowance payable (on a sliding scale according to the special guardian's means). Maximum payments are based on 100% of fostering allowances at the time of the order (see [here](#) for allowance rates as at April 2019) and are age-banded.

Eligibility for the allowance, and the proportion payable to a particular special guardian, are subject to review every year to take account of both the changing needs and circumstances of the child and special guardian. The Means test will be applied annually or on receipt of notification of a change in circumstances prior to the annual review.

Action for assessing social workers requesting consideration of a financial allowance:

Complete form in Appendix 3: Request for financial support of an SGO support plan for a looked after child. This form must be signed by the Fostering Team Manager.

Following completion of the means tested allowance assessment, recommendation of the allowance amount will be sent to the Head of Service (Children's Care Service) for approval.

Once approved, the financial support agreed will constitute part of the SGO Support Plan.

The Finance Team will also inform the applicants of the outcome directly. This notification must include:

- The amount of financial support;
- The frequency and method of payment;

- The period for which the financial support will be paid;
- The date when payments will start.

The arrangements and procedure for review, variation and termination of financial support will also be specified.

6. ENDING OF SGO ALLOWANCE

Payment to the Special Guardian will cease if the child:

- No longer lives with the Special Guardian;
- Ceases full-time education or training and starts work;
- Qualifies for Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance in their own right;
- Reaches the age of 18 unless still in full-time education or training, when it may continue until the end of the course or training.

Payment of ongoing financial support is dependent on the special guardian or prospective special guardian agreeing to inform the local authority if any of the above circumstances occurs.

Section C: Child arrangement orders – Financial support

This policy deals with Child Arrangement Orders and Allowances in relation both to children looked after, and to children within the community.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Children Act 1989 (as amended), Sections 8 to 15 and Schedule 1

1. INTRODUCTION

A Child Arrangement Order may be used to increase the degree of legal permanence in a placement with relatives or friends, or a long-term fostering placement, where this would be in the child's best interests. A child will no longer be a Looked After Child once a Child Arrangement Order is made and the fostering placement comes to an end.

The holder of a Child Arrangements Order exercises parental responsibility jointly with other people who have parental responsibility (for example the birth parents). In a Child Arrangements Order, parental responsibility is extended to the holder of the order. On the making of a Child Arrangements Order a Care Order comes to an end and therefore the child ceases to be looked after.

In a Child Arrangements Order the child's birth parents retain parental responsibility and they also retain the right to consent or not to adoption. The child's birth parents can also apply through the courts for contact with the child or a variation of the Child Arrangements Order.

Child Arrangements Orders can continue until the child is 18 years old. The family may have regular and frequent contact with their child. A Child Arrangements Order specifies where the child should live. Financial Support is discretionary where a Child Arrangement Order is in place.

2. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Child Arrangement Order financial support will only be paid in respect of a child/ren who are or have been looked after by the Local Authority, or where the Local Authority is supporting a Care Plan for a Child Arrangement Order to prevent a child/ren coming into its care.

Financial support will not be considered under this Policy where the person with whom the child lives, or is to live, is a parent of the child or the husband or wife or civil partner of a parent of the child.

Financial support will only be payable where there has been an assessment that one of the following circumstances exist;

- Where it is necessary to ensure that the holders of a Child Arrangement Order can look after a child;
- Where the child needs special care which requires a greater expenditure of resources by reason of illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the continuing consequences of neglect - and the child's condition is serious and long-term;
- Where it is necessary for the local authority to make any special arrangements to facilitate the placement by reason of the age or ethnic origin of the child or the desirability of the child being placed with siblings or a child with whom he/she has previously shared a home;
- Where such support is to meet the recurring costs of travel for visits for the child to members of the birth family/significant others;
- Where the local authority considers it appropriate to contribute towards expenditure on legal costs, including Court fees (in cases where the Child Arrangement Order is supported by the local authority), or expenditure on accommodating the child (e.g. adaptations, furniture, clothing or transport).

Types of Payment

Payments under a Child Arrangement Order may be made in the following ways:

- Regular payments - which will be based upon the developmental age of the child and reviewed annually by the local authority, any change in circumstances will be considered;
- Lump sum payments (settling in costs, special needs and adaptations), which will cover items or adaptations that are required as a consequence of assessment of each child's individual needs. Payment may be in instalments and will end at a time specified by the local authority.

Financial support will not generally include the "reward" element which may be payable to foster carers and neither will payments be made in order to provide or maintain an income.

Ongoing payment assessment:

The Local Authority will use a Means Test (See appendix 1) to assess eligibility for allowances in all circumstances in which it is required, or decides, to means test in respect of Special Guardianship financial support applications, and to calculate the proportion of the full allowance payable (on a sliding scale according to the special guardian's means).

Maximum payments are based on 100% of fostering allowances at the time of the order (see [here](#) for allowance rates as at April 2019) and are age-banded. Allowances paid will be subject to deduction of benefits which the adopter can claim in respect of the child such as child benefit, tax credits etc.

Eligibility for the allowance, and the proportion payable to a particular special guardian, are subject to review every year to take account of both the changing needs and circumstances of the child and special guardian. The Means test will be applied annually or on receipt of notification of a change in circumstances prior to the annual review.

Action for assessing social workers requesting consideration of a financial allowance:

Complete form in Appendix 3. This form must be signed by the Fostering Team Manager.

Following completion of the means tested allowance assessment, recommendation of the allowance amount will be sent to the Head of Service (Children's Care Service) for approval.

Once approved, the financial support agreed will constitute part of the SGO Support Plan.

The Finance Team will also inform the applicants of the outcome directly. This notification must include:

- The amount of financial support;
- The frequency and method of payment;
- The period for which the financial support will be paid;
- The date when payments will start.

The arrangements and procedure for review, variation and termination of financial support will also be specified.

3. FORMER FOSTER CARERS:

Where the carer with a Child Arrangements Order was receiving Fostering Allowance for the child, they will continue to receive the Fostering Allowance and any Skills Fee (element of remuneration) for 2 years following that order. Allowances paid will be subject to deduction of benefits which the adopter can claim in respect of the child such as child benefit, tax credits etc.

4. ENDING OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support will end in the following circumstances:

- When a child reaches age 18, unless he/she continues in full time education or training when support may continue until the end of the course of education or training being undertaken, subject to any other financial support the child may be entitled to receive;
- Where a child ceases full-time education or training or commences employment;
- Where a child qualifies for income support or job seekers allowance in his/her own right;
- If a child leaves the home and this is regarded as a permanent departure. Temporary absences do not apply, e.g. boarding school, hospital, and respite care;
- The Child Arrangement Order is revoked.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – Means test

1	Details of Child/Children Subject to Assessment		
	Name(s)	D.O.B.(s)	Age(s)

2	Carers Name	Carers Address

3 PROJECTED FAMILY INCOME			
all figures must be monthly deductions		NET: after all	
i.	PAY	Parent 1	Parent 2
	Basic Net Monthly Pay		
	Net Drawings if Self Employed		
	TOTAL SUBSECTION 3i		
ii.	BENEFITS & PENSIONS (Parents)	Parent 1	Parent 2
	Employers Sick Pay (after deductions)		
	Income Support / Jobseekers Allowance		
	Incapacity Benefit / ESA		
	All Statutory Maternity Pay, Paternity Pay, Adoption Pay, Maternity Allowance		
	Bereavement Benefit		
	Working Tax Credit excl. any childcare element		
	Private/Occupational Pensions		
	Other State Benefits incl. State Pension		
	TOTAL SUBSECTION 3ii.		
iii.	BENEFITS (Children)	Monthly	
	Child Tax Credit		
	Child Benefit for all children except those subject to this financial assessment		
	TOTAL SUBSECTION 3iii.		
iv.	OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME	Monthly	
	Capital, savings & investments - net monthly interest		

	Income from Borders/Lodgers		See Guidance Notes on how to calculate these figures
	Income from Furnished Properties		
	Income from Unfurnished Properties		
	Maintenance Payments Received for Any Child in the Household		
	Existing Adoption or Special Guardianship 'Allowances' - incl. any enhancements or specific payments for special needs		This only relates to children Adopted or Fostered out of Bucks
	TOTAL SUBSECTION 3iv.		
v.	INCOME RELATING TO CHILD(REN) BEING ADOPTED OR BECOMING A SPECIAL GUARDIAN CHILD		Monthly
	Any regular interest on capital and/or income in which the child(ren) has a legal interest and entitlement e.g. trust fund, property or other type of legacy		
	Any other income		
	TOTAL SUBSECTION 3v.		

Calcs	TOTAL PROJECTED FAMILY INCOME (totals section 3)		All per month
	DISREGARD FIRST 20%		
	FAMILY INCOME FOR PURPOSES OF TEST		

4	PROJECTED FAMILY EXPENDITURE		
	all figures must be monthly		
i.	Mortgage payments (capital & interest) incl. any endowment payments linked to the mortgage		
	Rent (after Housing Benefit deducted)		
	Council Tax (after Ctax Reduction/Discount deducted)		
	TOTAL SUBSECTION 4i.		
ii.	OTHER OUTGOINGS		Monthly

	Loan repayments for essential purposes		
	Maintenance Payments		
	Court Orders		
	Private Pension Contributions		
	National Insurance (if self employed)		
	Reasonable childcare costs incl. nursery fees (after Tax Credit Childcare Element deducted)		
	TOTAL SUBSECTION 4ii.		
iii.	CORE REGULAR FAMILY EXPENDITURE		Monthly
	125% Income Support Allowance for the Household Calculate allowance for the family as it stands now. Include child(ren) subject to this assessment if they are living with the family at this time. Exclude them if not.		See Guidance Notes for allowance rates Figure must be monthly
	TOTAL SUBSECTION 4iii.		

Calcs	TOTAL PROJECTED FAMILY INCOME (totals section 3)		All per month
	DISREGARD FIRST 20%		
	FAMILY INCOME FOR PURPOSES OF TEST		

5	CALCULATE FINAL PAYMENT		See Guidance Notes for allowance rates Figure must be monthly
	LOCAL AUTHORITY MAX PAYMENT TO ADOPTERS/GUARDIANS (per month) For the child(ren) subject to this assessment		
	50% DISPOSABLE INCOME FIGURE (per month) populates automatically - note if disposable income figure = 0 or negative use Local Auth Max		
	AMOUNT OF CHILD BENEFIT (per month) for the child(ren) subject to this assessment		
	FINAL PAYMENT TO ADOPTERS/SPECIAL GUARDIAN (per month)		

6	FOR BOARDED OUT SYSTEM		
	Boarded out Allowance - Child 1 (weekly figure)		
	Boarded out Allowance - Child 2 (weekly figure)		

	Boarded out Allowance - Child 3 (weekly figure)		
	Boarded out Allowance - Child 4 (weekly figure)		
	Less 50% Disposable Income figure (row 73) converted to weekly		
	TOTAL WEEKLY ADOPTION FIGURE (per week)		

APPENDIX 2 – Adoption assessment request form

APPENDIX 3(Adoption)

Request for Financial Support of an Adoption Support Plan for a Looked After Child

Child's Name:		LCS	
Child's Date of Birth:			
Child's Ethnicity:			
Date of Adoption Panel			

This proposal for financial support should be agreed prior to matching. (please ✓ type of payment)

A regular ongoing allowance	<input type="checkbox"/>
A single payment	<input type="checkbox"/>
A series of lump sums	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which of the following criteria are met: (please tick)

A	Where it is necessary to ensure that adoptive parents can look after a child	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	Where it is necessary for the local authority to make any special arrangements to facilitate the adoption by reason of the age or ethnic origin of the child or the desirability of the child being placed with siblings or a child with whom he/she has previously shared a home.	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	Where the child needs special care which requires a greater expenditure of resources by reason of illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the continuing consequences of neglect - and the child's condition is serious and long-term.	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	Where such support is to meet the recurring costs of travel for visits for the child to members of the birth family/significant others	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	To contribute to meet the following kinds of expenditure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal costs where adoption order is contested • Introductions between the child and prospective adoptive parents 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Please give details to explain why the particular criteria is met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

Complete this section only if the prospective adopter is the current foster carer for the child.

Does this proposal include an element of remuneration for the
Yes No

foster carer in order to facilitate the adoption order?

What banding does the current foster carer currently receive?

This element of remuneration can be paid for up to two years following the making of the adoption Order. The element of remuneration can be paid beyond the two year period **only in exceptional circumstances.**

Do you consider that there are exceptional circumstances in this case which may warrant the payment of the element of remuneration beyond the two year period following the making of the Adoption Order?

Yes No

What are the exceptional circumstances?

Please complete the following for ALL proposals for the payment of financial support

If the request is for payments other than a means tested allowance, what is the amount of financial support that you are proposing and for what purpose? Please be specific with costs.

SIGNED	SIGNATURE	DATE
Family Finder		
Adoption Team Manager Carole Atkins		
Head of Care Service Nathan Whitley		

APPENDIX 3 – SGO/CAO Financial assessment referral form

FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT REFERRAL FORM

All sections must be completed

Financial Assessment required for:

Adoption

Special Guardianship

Residence Order

Applicant:

Name:

Address:

Child/ren relevant to an allowance

Name:

Currently residing with applicant?

Additional Information:

Have the applicants fostered the child/ren for 2+ years

Does the child/ren have special needs:

Current progress of application:

Other relevant details:

Referral From:

Name:

Team:

Contact Number:

PLEASE ADVISE WHO YOUR HEAD OF SERVICE IS: Nathan Whitley

Email back to financeassessment@buckscc.gov.uk

APPENDIX 4 – Notification to carer of payment template

Notification to Carer of the Payment of Financial Support in respect Adoption/ Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Orders

To: (name of prospective adoptive parents/special guardians)

Address:

This notification is for the payment of financial support for adoption/ special guardianship or child arrangements order in respect of:

Child's name:

It has been agreed that the financial support will be paid as: (Please tick)

An ongoing allowance	<input type="checkbox"/>
A single payment	<input type="checkbox"/>
A series of payments	<input type="checkbox"/>

The financial support has been determined by considering the child's needs in relation to your family's resources. The amount of financial support to which you are entitled is:

Ongoing financial support will be paid fortnightly in arrears and the first payment will be made on:

Date:

Or:

You are to be paid a single/series of payments; this/these will be paid on the following dates:

Date:

Date:

Conditions:

The conditions attached to the payment of financial support (if any) are:

Before Buckinghamshire County Council is able to pay ongoing financial support for the adoptive/ special guardianship/ child arrangements placement, the Adoption Support Regulations 2005 and Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 require that you must agree to the following conditions:

1. That you will inform Buckinghamshire County Council immediately if the child in your care:

- No longer lives with you;
- Ceases full-time education or training and starts work;
- Qualifies for Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance in their own right;

This will result in payment being ended or reviewed.

2. That you will complete and supply Buckinghamshire County Council with an annual statement

regarding:

- Your financial circumstances
- The financial needs and resources of the child
- Your address and whether the child still has a home with you.

(A form will be sent to you each year for your to complete)

Arrangements for Review, Variation and Termination of Financial Support

Any ongoing financial support arrangement is reviewed annually by the Adoption Team. If the financial support is to be varied or to cease, you will be given written notice of the change.

Please contact your Social worker if you have any queries about this notice.			
I/We agree to the conditions set out above:			
Signed (1):		Date:	
Signed (2):		Date:	
(Please keep a copy of this notification for your own records)			

APPENDIX 5 – Annual review template

Annual Review of Financial Support in respect Adoption/ Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Orders

Name of Adopters/ Special Guardians/ Carers:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Name of Child:	

Please answer the following questions:

1. Does the child continue to have his/her home with you? If No, please give details.
2. Is the child still receiving full-time education or training? If so, when will this cease?
3. Which school/college is s/he attending?
4. Have there been any significant changes in your child's needs relevant to the payment of financial support since the last review?
5. Is there any other information you think may be useful for this review?
(Please continue on a separate piece of paper or overleaf, if necessary)

Signed:		Date:	
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Please return this form with the financial assessment form within 10 days.

Thank you.

