

Report to Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Decision to be taken on or after 12 July 2019.

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

Cabinet Member Report No. CS05.19

Title:	Financial arrangements for Adoption, Special Guardians and Care Arrangement Order policy update
Date:	05 July 2019
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Local members affected:	All

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

Summary

This decision sets out the circumstances in which financial support will be considered for special guardians, Adopters and carers with a Child Arrangement Order and how these will be assessed and reviewed. The review of this policy ensures that it aligns with the Buckinghamshire County Council Fostering and Staying Put policies.

Recommendation

APPROVE the updated Adoption, SGO and CAO payment policy, amendments include:

- **Bringing our payments in line with the current fostering rates**

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

The Adoption & Children Act 2002 provides the legal framework for Special Guardianship. Section 115 (1) of the 2002 Act inserts new sections 14 A - F into the Children Act 1989. Local authorities are required to make arrangements for the provision of special guardianship support services. These include counselling, advice, information and such other services

(including financial support) as are prescribed in the Regulations. The Regulations also provide for the assessment of needs for special guardianship support services, and the planning and the reviewing of those support services. 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. Financial Support is discretionary for Child Arrangement and this policy sets out the circumstances in which financial support will be provided.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

The Local Authority has a legal duty to provide services and support including financial support in the circumstances provided above

Return to birth family: This option is not appropriate for the children considered under this policy. The arrangements for them are permanent and made by the Court.

C. Resource implications

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

Please see above

E. Legal implications

The local authority has a statutory duty to provide support services including financial support and will therefore be fulfilling its statutory duty. There are no other legal implications.

F. Property implications

None

G. Unitary Council

None

H. Other implications/issues

None

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

The Staying Put Strategy is a county wide plan; therefore local Member consultation is not applicable.

J. Communication issues

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

K. Progress Monitoring

Regular monthly reporting of placements 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

The policy forming part of this decision will be reviewed after 2 years

Background Papers

n/a

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 11 July 2019. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk