

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee

DATE: 19 March 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Young Peoples Directorate

SUBJECT: Review of Fees & Charges – Foster Carers 2009-10

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 In accordance with the annual budget review, to seek the Boards approval of the proposed increases in fees and charges for the rates paid to foster carers.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the proposed fees and charges outlined in the Appendix be approved.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Appendix attached to this report details the current and proposed fees and charges for Children's Services foster carer rates.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the basic foster care allowances for 2009-10 are increased in line with the recommended minimum allowances proposed by the Fostering Network (Appendix 1).
- 3.3 For those circumstances where the Fostering Network does not make a recommendation, it is proposed that the rates are increased by 2.45% (Appendix 2).
- 3.4 The basic allowances for foster carers includes a weekly allowance plus birthday, Christmas and holiday allowances. Fees will need to be increased with effect from 1st April 2009.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications as a result of this report.

5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Provision exists to meet this expenditure within the Council's approved budget for children in care placements.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People

Increasing the Foster Carer allowances in line with the rates proposed by the Fostering Network will improve the authority's ability to recruit and retain Foster Carers and reduce the dependency on higher cost independent agency and out of borough placements.

6.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton Borough Council

N/A

6.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

6.4 A Safer Halton

Sufficient provision is required for the increased numbers of children who need to be cared for by the local authority.

6.5 Halton's Urban

N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The proposals will reduce the risk of not being able to recruit or retain foster carers in Halton. There are ongoing risks in relation to increased numbers of children requiring to be cared for by the local authority and difficulty in recruiting appropriate foster carers within Halton, however robust gate keeping and monitoring measures are in place.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The provision for Children in Care within Foster Care is based on, wherever possible, a clear match between the needs of children and the skills of their prospective carers. Additionally by potentially improving both the recruitment and retention of carers the equality of opportunity for Children in Care in Halton will be improved.

9.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

9.1 Fees and charges for foster carers will need to be increased with effect from 1st April 2009.

**10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
-----------------	----------------------------	------------------------

None.

APPENDIX 1 - Children's Services – Fostering Rates

Boarding Out Allowance paid to all carers:	£ Current	£ Proposed
Age 0 – 4	121.68	125.09
Age 5 – 10	138.61	142.49
Age 11 – 15	172.55	177.38
Age 16 +	209.86	215.74

Enhanced Boarding Out Allowance paid to carers who are managing people with complex needs:

Age 0 – 4	232.65	239.16
Age 5 – 10	249.39	256.37
Age 11 – 15	282.95	290.87
Age 16+	322.83	331.87

Christmas Allowances All Children

Age 0 – 4	121.68	125.09
Age 5 – 10	138.61	142.49
Age 11 – 15	172.55	177.38
Age 16+	209.86	215.74

Birthday Allowances All Children

Age 0 – 4	121.68	125.09
Age 5 – 10	138.61	142.49
Age 11 – 15	172.55	177.38
Age 16+	209.86	215.74

Holiday Allowances – Lump Sum All Children

Age 0 - 4	243.36	250.18
Age 5 - 10	277.22	284.98
Age 11 – 15	345.10	354.76
Age 16+	419.72	431.48

	Current £	Proposed £
Specialist Foster Scheme Weekly Payment (plus basic foster care allowance)	341.40	N/A
Home From Home full day	30.27	31.01
Home From Home ½ day	14.90	15.26
Day Care full day	17.50	17.93
Day Care ½ day	8.75	8.96
 Clothing Allowance (one off payment)		
Age 0-4	271.23	277.87
Age 5-10	361.71	370.57
Age 11-16	552.10	556.80
Age 16-17	543.49	556.80
 School Uniform	 166.54	 170.62

Any other rates not listed for Children's Services will be increased by 2.45%