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Designation	Head of Children & Adult Services
Date	14/05/18

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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

DATE:

BY: Head of Children and Adult Services

SUBJECT: Foster Care Capacity and Payments to Foster Carers

1 PURPOSE

This report updates Elected Members on proposed changes to payments to Foster Carers and Share the Carers to maintain current foster carers and attract new carers in East Lothian to reverse recent trends of increases in external fostering placements and the financial pressures that result.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Elected Members to note and agree the content of this report and to remit the Head of Children & Adult Services to implement from 01 June 2018, new provisions in respect of:

- Foster Care including Fees and Allowances
- Share the Care including Carer Rates

2.2 To note the Supported Lodging 'Step Forward' service and Continuing Care Adult Service introduction from within the existing budget.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 East Lothian has always been a fertile local authority for the recruitment of foster carers. East Lothian's Fostering Service was almost self-sufficient having enough foster carers to give a choice of foster placements to meet the needs of all looked after children and young people since disaggregation from Lothian Region in 1996.

3.2 When Independent Fostering Agencies were permitted to recruit on a 'not for profit' basis in Scotland, this impacted on local authority foster carer recruitment, as these agencies pay high rate weekly fostering allowances and a reasonable Foster Care fee, passing these costs to the local authorities who procure the placement, in addition to a management fee.

Increased spending against looked after children budgets resulted. This, combined with the impact of austerity on local authority finance led the City of Edinburgh Council to make significant investment in their own foster carer recruitment. Edinburgh now procure fewer placements from East Lothian, other neighbouring authorities and independent fostering agencies.

- 3.3 In 2014 fostering recruitment was less buoyant in East Lothian and although the ratio of foster carers retiring to foster carers being recruited was fairly evenly matched, the depth of experience was not. The number of foster placements purchased by the City of Edinburgh and Midlothian gradually reduced, impacting on generated income.

As a result, in 2015 an improved marketing strategy and updated Fostering and Adoption recruitment materials were developed. These new materials were available in early 2016. Recruitment was initially slow, but following an intensive Foster Carer Recruitment campaign it produced three fostering households initially providing short break placements by the end of 2017.

A large lamp post wrap campaign in key locations in Musselburgh at the end of 2017 with supporting multimedia publicity, has resulted in 3 strong foster carer households offering full time foster care, who it is hoped will be approved by the summer of 2018.

3.4 **Current Capacity of East Lothian Foster Carers**

There are currently 60 East Lothian foster carer households providing 90 placements to East Lothian Children:

- 24% are committed to providing long- term/permanent placements so have no additional capacity.
- 24% of carers are aged between 60 - 75 years, some of whom are indicating they are planning to retire when their current placements come to an end or plan to reduce the number of placements they provide.
- 6% are dedicated respite foster carers providing support care. These foster carers have no plans to become full time foster carers.

This leaves only 46% of foster carers with capacity to provide new foster placements when their current placements end. With little capacity in the system, the needs of the children on referral for placement do not always match with the approval status of available foster carers.

3.5 **Current External Foster Placements**

Since May 2017, the number of external foster placements made has significantly reduced. However, there are still ongoing financial commitments for 12 existing external foster placements and 1 in a young adult placement. 60% of these children are linked and matched with long-

term specialist external foster carers. These children have established relationships and attachments to these carers and will remain in these permanent placements.

In order to reduce external placement use by 40% in next 2 years, 4 foster care households with specialist skills (such as caring for children with learning disabilities and autism or sibling groups) will need to be recruited. It is likely that an exceptional needs payment will be required to attract suitable people.

3.6 Foster Carer Payments: Fostering Allowance and Foster Care Fee

Foster Carers receive a **Fostering Allowance** to cover the cost of feeding, clothing, outings, activities, personal allowance and with a percentage to cover utilities and general wear and tear of a foster carer's home. The Fostering Allowance increases with each age band as follows:

Table 1: East Lothian Fostering Allowances

Weekly Rate				
Age Range	Clothing	Pocket Money	Maintenance Element	Standard Rate
0 to 4	£ 15.28	£ 1.91	£ 97.26	£ 114.45
5 to 10	£20.68	£ 5.42	£ 107.60	£ 133.71
11 to 13	£ 27.88	£ 8.89	£ 121.21	£ 157.98
14 to 15	£ 28.89	£ 12.95	£ 121.90	£ 163.74
16 to 18	£ 32.74	£ 20.38	£ 146.99	£ 200.11

The above provides a breakdown of the standard weekly allowances showing guideline figures for maintenance, clothing and personal allowance. In addition, Christmas and Birthday allowances equivalent to one week's standard allowance and Holiday allowance equivalent to two weeks standard allowance are paid.

Foster Carers also receive a **Foster Care Fee**, which is the reward element of their payment, based on three skills levels, to provide incentives for all carers to commit to learning and development opportunities. The strength of this when it was introduced in 2000 was the investment in the competencies of carers rather than the degree of difficulty of the child. However, it proved in the long run to be divisive at times.

The current fee structure based on this model, which has not been increased since 2012, is as follows:

Table 2: East Lothian Foster Carer Fees

Contract Fees		
Rate	Weekly Rate	Daily Rate
Level 1	£ 151.50	£ 21.64
Level 2	£ 202.00	£ 28.86
Level 3	£ 303.00	£ 43.29

3.7 Current Foster Care Pressures

Current pressures are:

- 3.7.1. Succession planning for the 24% of carers who will retire over the next 2-5 years
- 3.7.2 The need to recruit more long-term and permanent foster carers to reduce future use of external fostering placements
- 3.7.3 The need to recruit more foster carers to enable young people to remain in their foster placement via Continuing Care
- 3.7.4 With referrals to Children's Services rising, 18 additional fostering placements will be required over the next 2 years: 9 placements to increase the current foster carer pool, mindful of East Lothian's increasing population and a further 9 placements to provide the opportunity to recover from recent losses of approved foster carers, manage the annual loss of foster carers and build capacity into East Lothian's foster carer community.
- 3.7.5 The main competition comes from the City of Edinburgh Council, with their substantial advertising budget, rolling recruitment strategy and more staff to process enquiries and applications. As a result they have recruited sufficient foster carers in East Lothian to have their own Foster Carer support groups.

In East Lothian the new advertising materials have been successful in raising awareness and the Service has the capacity to respond quickly to enquiries and applications. However, to be successful, payments must mirror Edinburgh's payment structure, which pays higher Foster Care Fees than East Lothian. (Their Fostering Allowances are broadly similar.)

3.8 Foster Carer Finance – the big Picture

Scotland does not have a minimum Fostering Allowance. The Scottish Government announced its intention to progress this longstanding issue. The matter was recently discussed at COSLA. There would be additional budget pressures in the future if the minimum fostering allowance is set higher than the rates paid to East Lothian's foster carers. This would also increase payments to formal Kinship Carers entitled to financial parity with foster carers. However, this is viewed as a low risk as East Lothian's Fostering Allowances are competitive.

This proposal is to change only East Lothian Foster Care Fees. This will have implications for Share the Care Payments, but as detailed in Appendix 3 there is sufficient budget already available to meet this additional cost.

There are no other associated budgetary implications in taking this step. Formal Kinship Carers do not receive a fee payment, only a Kinship Care Allowance, which is equivalent to Fostering Allowances.

3.9 Fostering recruitment is challenging nation-wide. Most areas report disappointing levels of response to initiatives in Scotland over Foster Care Fortnight in May last year. Foster Care Fortnight 2018 is from May 14th - 27th.

3.10 East Lothian's Foster Care Fee Payments must be competitive with the City of Edinburgh Council's Scheme. A fee payment scheme that financially rewards carers who are motivated to care for adolescent children, given the need for more, is favoured. The following proposal replaces the three levels scheme with a two levels scheme based on age. This should eliminate the financial incentive for residents of East Lothian, interested in fostering to apply to other fostering agencies, and to Edinburgh Council specifically.

Table 3 Comparative Edinburgh: East Lothian Fee Structure (2018/19)

Age	Edinburgh	Proposed East Lothian Fees
	Amount per week	
0-11 years	£160.64 per week	£160.00 per week
12 years +	£219.70 per week	£220.00 per week
Specialist & Disability	£401.61 per week	
Enhanced Specialist	£487.28 (pro rata)	

3.10.1 The impact of the proposed changes to Foster Care Fees on existing foster carers is as follows:

No East Lothian approved foster carers will be disadvantaged financially.

Existing foster carers can opt in or out of the proposed changes to fees.

All new foster carers will be on the new fee payment scheme.

- Some foster carers will be better off remaining on the old scheme until they retire.
- Others can wait until the children they care for are older and then move to the new scheme.
- Carers can opt to remain in the old scheme or move into the new scheme but **cannot opt back into the old scheme at a later date.**

- It is proposed that the old scheme rates are locked down so there will be no application of annual/future increases that may apply to the new scheme.

3.11 Future Provision- Financial Enhancements

- Financial enhancements for challenging placements, and possibly sibling placements are being considered to avoid the use of external placements driven by their specialist skills around children with complex autism, and criticism by inspectors for not managing to keep some siblings together.
- This would provide incentive for current Level 3 Foster carers to consider a more challenging placement when they have placement availability.
- It requires further modelling to ensure this is affordable and sustainable given the budget pressures on Children's Services in 2018/19.
- Children's Services strongly believe it is necessary to offer enhancements for the most challenging placements and for some specialist skills in order to divert young people from more expensive residential and external provisions. The possibility of some diversion of External Foster Placement budget to facilitate this would greatly assist this development.

3.12 East Lothian Foster Care Recruitment:

The proposed recruitment strategy is to encourage people to care for older children and siblings to better meet current placement needs and avoid external placement.

- **18 foster placements will be needed by April 2020**
- six for age range 0-11 years
- twelve for age range 12 years +

As some new carers are likely to offer two placements, calculations are based on the number of additional placements rather than foster carer households. The conversion rate of enquiries about fostering to approval as a foster carer is 1:20. Our recent experience suggests this ratio is rising.

3.13 Budget implications 2018 onwards

The current Foster Care Fee Budget is £834,910 per annum.

The additional recurring cost per annum to increase fees for existing foster carers is £62,370.

This would take the Foster Care Fee budget to £897,280.

With a further net increase of £49,500 in both 2018/19 and 2019/20 from the new placements (offset by lost placements), this would give a total budget required in 2018/19 of £946,780 and in 2019/20 of £996,280. This is an increase of £161,370 over two years.

Table 4: Projected Foster Care spend on increased fee payments

	Budget 18/19 (9 additional placements by April 2019)	19/20 (another 9 placements by April 2020)
Fees	£834,910	£946,780
Increase current carers	£62,370	nil
Total	£897,280	£946,780
Investment 18 new placement Fees	£99,000 (9 placements)	£99,000 (9 placements)
Less 9 current placements lost through retirement	Less 4.5 Placements £49,500	Less 4.5 placements £49,500
Total Fees at 31 March	£946,780	£996,280

Increasing the number of foster carers/ households will also lead to increased expenditure on Fostering Allowances, as 18 more children will be placed. There is no plan to increase the amount of each allowance, just the number of them paid.

Table 5: Projected spend on increased number of fostering allowances

	Budget 18/19 + 9 additional placements	Budget 19/20 + 9 additional placements
Allowances	£1,226,410	£1,268,410
18 new placements	£84,000 (9 placements)	£84,000 (9 placements)

Fostering allowances		
Less 9 placements lost through retirement	Less £42,000 (4.5 placements)	Less £42,000 (4.5 placements)
Total fostering allowances at 31 March	£1,268,410	£1,310,410

Combined, the additional Foster Care Fees and Fostering Allowances, and additional staff resources to create the capacity to recruit and support the additional carers and young people placed, generates a total budget necessary modelled as follows:

Table 6: Total cost to increase capacity by 18 foster placements by 31 March 2019 - Increased cost per year

Foster Carer Fees	Year 1 18/19	£111,870
Foster Carer Fees	Year 2 19/20	£49,500
Total		£161,370
Foster Care Allowances	Year 1 18/19	£42,000
Foster Care Allowances	Year 2 19/20	£42,000
Total		£245,370
Publicity budget	Year 1 18/19	£15,000*
Publicity budget	Year 2 19/20	£15,000*
Senior Practitioner (See 3.14)	Year 1 18/19	£51,200
Senior Practitioner	Year 2 19/20	£51,900
Total Cost		£378,470
*Minus Publicity: budget to be met from Adoption Income (See 3.13)		£30,000
Total Cost		£348,470

3.14 **Publicity Budget:** It is recommended that a dedicated budget of £15k per annum is available to support ongoing recruitment and market presence for East Lothian's Foster Care Service. Additional income could be generated through selling an adoption placement to meet the expenditure in the publicity budget.

3.15 **Senior Practitioner Post:** To implement the proposed service developments an additional full time experienced Senior Practitioner (Grade 10 - max £51,000 including on costs) will be required. The post holder will have a lead responsibility for ongoing recruitment and publicity in the Fostering Service (and other care options); undertake some homestudies of applicant foster carer applicants; supervise practitioners overseeing placements and provide Supervising Social Worker support to new carers in view of increased placement capacity by March 2019. The post holder will also need to run more Fostering Preparation Groups and

post approval support and developmental groups. There is not capacity within the current team to meet these additional demands.

3.16 Share the Care: The proposed Foster Care changes will have implications for the Share the Care scheme, the family based short breaks scheme for children with disabilities and their families.

It is proposed to increase Share the Carer Rates. There is funding within the present Share the Care budget to achieve this and to recruit more share the carers to meet the demand for this type of respite support: Please see Appendix 3 for details.

3.17 Permanent Need and Capacity – Baseline Budget Allocation

- The population of East Lothian will grow at a faster rate than most local authorities in Scotland, resulting in more Looked After Children who are accommodated, and the need for more foster carers. There is also the need for foster carer succession planning.
- It is not possible to increase Foster Carer Capacity by 9 placements over 2 years, place children into those placements (which can be a child's 'forever home'), and subsequently withdraw the funding. Similarly, the Fostering Fees cannot be increased to match the competition without the permanent continuation of the increase in the Foster Care Fees budget, as detailed in Table 6.
- There was a 2017/18 injection of £300K into the Community Resources budget over two years (2017/18 and 2019/20), partly to increase Foster Carer capacity and partly to cover Hope House, disability residential provision, costs. The rationale for this investment still stands and the current proposals are additional to that ongoing requirement.
- The current projected spend on External Foster Placements is £499,469 at year end 2017/18.
- The recruitment of foster carers to provide 18 additional 'in house' placements, should reverse the current trend to procure placements from Independent Fostering Providers. However, it will take time to see any impact - some of these children are permanently placed with these external providers and they will not be moved.
- New foster carers will take time to be assimilated, and their capacity will initially not match the skills and experience of those who retire. Having a 20% increase in placement capacity will also have implications for staff in Fostering and Adoption Services who will be providing a higher level of support and supervision to these new less experienced carers.

- It is anticipated that the Service will return to being almost self-sufficient of foster placements and offering some placement choice to best meet the skills of foster carers with the needs of the looked after children and young people.
- The challenge for the next 5 years for Fostering and Adoption Services is to continue to review and adjust the Fostering Recruitment Strategy against placement need and foster carer recruitment outcomes.
- This foster carer equilibrium is ever changing. The rise in Formal and Informal Kinship care placements may adversely impact on fostering and adoption in coming years as some kinship carers struggle to sustain placements when young people reach adolescence. This has contributed to the need to recruit more adolescent foster carers.
- The East Lothian Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy will be subject to regular audit.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is proposed to change the fee payment scheme from a Payment for Foster Carer Skills based system to one based on the age of the child in placement. This is in response to meeting placement needs from within East Lothian resources and to competing like for like with fostering agencies already actively recruiting in East Lothian.
- 4.2 The proposed changes will have implications for the Share the Care scheme. It is proposed to increase Share the Care rates, from funding within the present Share the Care Budget and to recruit more Share the Carers to meet the demand for this type of respite support. *See Appendix 3 for details.*
- 4.3 A new scheme of supported lodging hosts is proposed to meet the Scottish Government's Continuing Care agenda and the development of Aftercare Support for care leavers as per the provisions of Part 10 and Part 11 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This new scheme is called "Step Forward". The costs of this scheme will be met from existing budgets.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and no negative impacts have been identified. No East Lothian approved foster carers will be disadvantaged by the proposed new payment scheme.



6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Financial – Members of Council Management Team will note it is not possible to increase Foster Carer Capacity by 9 placements in each of the next 2 years, place children into those placements, and then withdraw the funding. In addition, it would not be possible to increase Fostering Fees to compete with the main competition without the continuation of the increase in budget, detailed in Table 6.

It is recommended that the injection of £300K into the Children’s Services Foster Care Service’s budget to increase Foster Carer capacity, is a permanent investment. It is intended to use this investment to stop the increased use of External Fostering Placements but it will not eliminate this expenditure as some young people are in permanent foster placements.

It is recommended that an additional full time Senior Practitioner Fostering post is agreed to support the proposed Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy, increase in carer households/placement, foster carer support, supervision, learning and development and to build capacity to achieve positive outcomes for looked after and accommodated children to fulfil Corporate Parenting responsibilities. This generates an additional 1FTE, Grade 10 post requiring budget of c£51K; this has been built into the finance model outlined in Table 6.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix 1** **East Lothian Foster Carer and Share the Carer Payments**
- Appendix 2** **Step Forward: East Lothian’s Supported Lodgings Scheme**
- Appendix 3** **Share the Care Proposal to increase Share the Care Payments**

AUTHOR’S NAME	Judith Tait Celia Borland
DESIGNATION	Head of Children & Adult Services Group Service Manager, Long- term Support
CONTACT INFO	Direct Line 01620 82 7930
DATE	30 April 2018

Appendix 1- East Lothian Payments to Carers - May 2013

1. Fostering Allowances

Age Range	Clothing	Pocket Money	Maintenance Element	Standard Rate
0 to 4	£ 15.28	£ 1.91	£ 97.26	£ 114.45
5 to 10	£20.68	£ 5.42	£ 107.60	£ 133.71
11 to 13	£ 27.88	£ 8.89	£ 121.21	£ 157.98
14 to 15	£ 28.89	£ 12.95	£ 121.90	£ 163.74
16 to 18	£ 32.74	£ 20.38	£ 146.99	£ 200.11

The above presents a breakdown of the standard weekly allowances showing guideline figures for maintenance, clothing and pocket money. In addition, Christmas and Birthday allowances equivalent to one week's standard allowance and Holiday allowance equivalent to two weeks standard allowance. Christmas allowances will be paid in advance of the one in which Christmas falls.

Age Range	0 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 13	14 to 15	16 to 18
Standard Allowance Daily Rate	£ 16.35	£ 19.10	£ 22.57	£23.39	£ 28.59

2. Foster Care Fees

Rate	Weekly Rate	Daily Rate
Level 1	£ 151.50	£ 21.64
Level 2	£ 202.00	£ 28.86
Level 3	£ 303.00	£ 43.29

3. Adoption Allowance Rates

Age Range	Full	Less CB1	Less CB2
0 to 4	£ 111.44	£ 91.14	£ 98.04
5 to 10	£ 130.19	£ 109.89	£ 116.79
11 to 13	£ 153.83	£ 133.53	£ 140.43
14 to 15	£ 159.44	£ 139.14	£ 146.04
16 to 18	£ 194.86	£ 174.56	£ 181.46

CB = Child Benefit

4. Outreach £ 8.00 per hour

5. Share the Care Level 1

Age Range	0 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 13	14 to 15	16 to 18
Standard Daily Rate	£ 34.96	£ 36.40	£38.29	£38.39	£41.88

Share the Care Level 2

Age Range	0 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 13	14 to 15	16 to 18
Standard Daily Rate	£42.10	£43.54	£45.43	£45.53	£49.02

Appendix 2 – Continuing Care and After Care

Step Forward – East Lothian’s Supported Lodging Scheme (Edited from the Step Forward Young Person’s Handbook)

Continuing Care and After Care:

Continuing Care has been introduced by the Scottish Government in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and supporting regulations and guidance.

This provision enables young people to ask to remain in their placement up to the age of 21 years, whether in a local authority, third sector or independent provider placement and better prepares young people to transition out of the care system. There has been a rise in the number of young people and young adults requesting to remain in placement for longer, contributing to fewer available East Lothian foster placements. However, remaining in foster care for longer benefits young people who are subsequently less demanding on East Lothian’s **After Care Service** and make a smoother transition from interdependent to independent living. A supported lodging scheme “Step Forward” is being introduced from existing budgets.

What is Step Forward?

Step Forward a service for young people, aged between 16 and 21, to help bridge the gap between being looked after and independent living. It provides semi-independent accommodation in the home of a Supported Lodging Host. These hosts provide a safe, supportive and comfortable environment along with advice and guidance at the level needed by the young person.

Service Aims

- To help young people into independent living through providing a fully assessed, safe and caring home environment
- To empower young people and help prevent homelessness
- To increase the number of young people sustaining employment, further education/training and reaching their potential
- To increase the number of young people managing and sustaining a tenancy
- To reduce the number of young people in Homeless Accommodation

Eligibility

The young people placed with Step Forward Hosts will have been looked after in either:

- Foster care

- Residential care
- Looked After at home
- Residential school
- Secure Unit

Most young people will come to a placement in a planned way and have the opportunity to meet with their host and prepare for the move. A few young people might come to the scheme from a crisis such as a fostering, kinship care, adoption or residential care breakdown.

Who Offers Supported Lodgings?

Step Forward Hosts are individuals or families who have a spare room in their home and who are willing to offer young people support and help. This help will depend on the young person's needs and what the Host is able to offer.

- Hosts have been specially selected and trained to provide young people with the space and support that will enable them to develop independent living skills.
- Step Forward Hosts have their own social workers, who are there to offer advice to the host's family and ensure they are able to meet young people's needs.
- Young people will have the opportunity to purchase and prepare their own meals and generally they will have access to most of the facilities in the house.

The 'Living Together' Agreement

Prior to a placement commencing, a Living Together Agreement meeting is held. The purpose of this is to discuss and agree the details of the placement. The Living Together Agreement will be a contract between the young person, the host and East Lothian's Step Forward Service, setting out roles and responsibilities. The contract will also include details such as financial responsibilities.

Financial Contributions

All Young People are required to make a financial contribution to their Placement. This enables them to learn and develop independent living skills. This prepares them for moving into their own tenancy. The financial contribution is determined by young person's income.

Planned Placement Endings

Step Forward aims for Placements to end on a planned basis, when the young person is ready for independence. Alternative accommodation should be identified in the community and the young person will be supported through the transition by their Host.

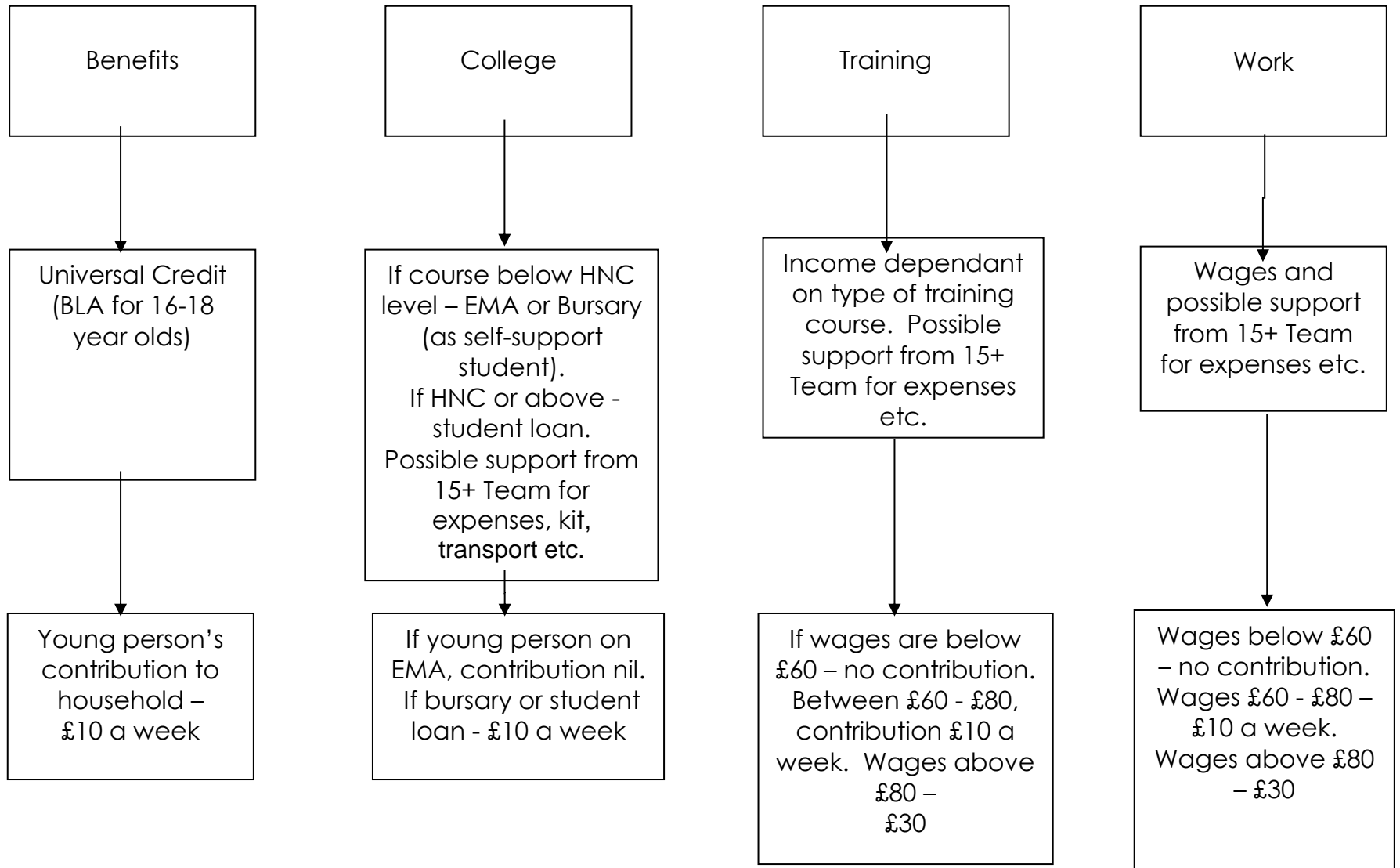
The Placement will be subject to regular Reviews. There will be discussions around when and if the young person is ready for moving into independent accommodation.

Young Person's Financial Contributions

All Young People are required to make a financial contribution to their Placement (see page 19). This enables the young person to learn and develop independent living skills. This preparation and experience will be of future benefit to the young person. The financial contribution is determined by the income of the young person.

As a young person's placement progresses, they will be expected to take more responsibility for buying their own food and cooking. As a result the amount they contribute may change. This will be agreed between the young person, their Step Forward Host and placing social worker.

Continuing Care – Financial Contributions for Young People



Appendix 3 – Share the Care Proposal to increase Share the Care payments

Purpose:

To update Elected Members on proposed changes to payments to Share the Carers as a consequence of the proposed changes to payments to foster carers.

Recommendation:

Elected members to agree the content of this appendix and remit to the Head of Children and Adult Services to implement new Share the Carer rates from 1 June 2018.

The proposed changes to payments should encourage more people to apply to become Share the Carers and offer short breaks to East Lothian children and young people with disabilities and their families and carers. This will reduce the need for the Children's Disability Service to source support from alternative, more expensive, providers.

Background:

- Share the Care is our short breaks family based care scheme for children and young people with disabilities up to the age of 16 years.
- The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 section 23, provides a framework for assessment, services and support to children with disabilities, children affected by disability and their families. Services for these children should be designed to minimise the adverse effects of disability and to enable them to lead lives that are as normal as possible. The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 also applies, requiring an Adult Carer Support Assessment to be provided if requested and Young Carers Statement if applies. The former was already embedded in Children's Services' practice but the position of Parent Carers and Young Carers (this includes siblings of children with disabilities) as unpaid carers has been amplified by being included in the Carers Act and local authority planning in place to comply with this new legislation that will be implemented on 1st April 2018.
- There are currently 20 approved Share the Carers providing a range of support to 24 children and young people. Some daytime Share the Carers support the child within the child's home for a few hours, others support the young person out of the child's home enabling a young person to engage in an activity and some provide regular overnight stays during the week or at a weekend.
- Share the Carers providing overnight stays must be assessed to meet the National Care Standards for Foster Care as the child will be staying in the carers home, whilst Daytime Share the Carers have all the necessary checks to provide care for children but have a more proportionate assessment to the level of support they are providing. All Share the Carer assessments are approved by the East Lothian Fostering Panel.

- There are currently 16 young people on the Share the Care waiting list.
- Family based care is the preference of many parents and carers seeking short break support. Over the years, even a modest level of share the care support, i.e. a few hours per week can make a difference to families and daytime share the care has grown as a result.
- The relationship between the Share the Carer, the child with disabilities and their family differs from fostering as the link with the Share the Carer is actively sought by the parent carers i.e. not imposed on them. Some very trusting relationships and friendships develop over the years.
- The Share the Carer often provides support to one child only and when the placement ends because the child has reached the age of 16 or because the placement has run its course the carer often decides to terminate their approval - often as their own family circumstances have changed.
- Share the Carers often combine this commitment with a job but there is one full time Share the Carer couple who provide short breaks to 5 East Lothian young people. They have exceptional skills and accredited training in supporting children with complex autism. In the past a learning disability nurse and partner have been recruited to provide 2 long term fostering placements to two looked after children and subsequently young adults with severe and complex needs.
- The Share the Care service needs to be developed over the next three years to provide more daytime support and more overnight stays as an alternative to residential respite.

Share the Care Development Plan

- to recruit 8 new Share the Carers in 2018/19 and a further 8 in 2019/2020.
- It is proposed that these new carers be recruited while continuing to provide support and training to existing Share the Carers from within current staffing budget in the Disability Team.
- The current annual budget for Share the Care is £89,470. This budget is underspent as it has taken well over a year to successfully recruit for the Share the Care lead role. However, this underspend has previously contributed to the financing of Hope House residential provision.
- The advent of self-directed support through personal budgets has necessitated putting a real cost to Share the Care. The proposed changes to foster carer fees gives the opportunity to address this.

Resource Implications – Proposal for Share the Care Finance

Daytime Share the Care

It is proposed that Daytime Share the Carers be paid a sessional **rate of £40 for a minimum of 4 hours**. This offers Share the Carers a similar rate to personal assistants employed via a Direct Payment. Share the Carers providing less than 4 hours support would be paid proportionately i.e. a minimum hourly session of £10.

Enhanced Payment Scheme

It is proposed that Direct Payment rates are mirrored by having an enhanced payment for more complex cases, based on the complexity of a child's needs. It is proposed to pay **£12 per hour**. Only one child at present would meet the criteria for an enhanced payment. In order to receive an Enhanced Payment the child would meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Carry out tasks that have required specific training from allied health professionals such as PEG feeding.
- Require carer to administer medication under Level 3 on East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership's Medication Policy.
- Level of child's behaviour as detailed in Behaviour Support Plan indicates that an enhanced payment is appropriate.

A recommendation for an enhanced payment would come via the Respite Support Panel and endorsement for the Enhanced Payment scheme would sit at Group Service Manager. The Group Service Manager, Long-term Care & Support is the Agency Decision Maker.

Share the Care Overnight Stays

It is proposed to increase the Share the Carer Fee payment to these carers to **£215 per week** (£30.71 per day) and pro rata Fostering Allowance depending on the age of the child. (see Appendix 1)

Impact on Disability Service Share the Care Budget

The overall impact on the Disability Services Share the Care budget, if these proposals were to be supported, is as follows:

The Share the Care budget is £89,470

- It appears significantly underspent because £32,599 comes out of Community Resources Foster Care Allowances Budget for Share the Carer payments for overnight stays and there is no recharge to the Share the Care Budget.
- Actual spend against this budget is circa £20,354 per annum with current level of overnight Share the Carers and current Day time Share the Care payments £32,599+£20,354 = £52,953.
- There is therefore a projected underspend in this budget of £36,517

It is proposed going forward that the £32,599 for overnight Share the Care is recharged to the Share the Care Budget, in view of the drive to increase Foster Carer numbers.

Share the Care Underspend

£31,899

The Future Modelling of the Share the care budget as proposed above would impact as follows:

There are 16 children and Young People on the Share the Care Waiting List. There are also children and young people not receiving their full packages of support.

- More Share the Carers need to be recruited.
- The pool of East Lothian Share the Carers needs to be increased over the next two years and therefore the budget underspend should not be permanently reassigned.

The estimated annual additional cost of providing Share the Care for these 16 additional young people by 31/3/20 would be:

- 6 Overnight Share the Carers
- 10 Day time Share the Carers
- Total additional Cost to Share the Care Budget at 31/3/19 £15,304.48
- Total additional Cost to Share the Care Budget at 31/3/20 £30,608.96

This target can therefore be funded within the current Share the Care budget and with recharge of Overnight Share the Care Payments.

Celia Borland
Group Service Manager Long-term Support
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