

Table 1 - Current Skill Fees

Authority	Skill Level 1	Skill Level 2	Skill Level 3	Discretionary Payments
Bradford	£133	£188	£268	Discretionary higher rate available
Calderdale	£85	£138	£277	Discretionary higher rate available
Leeds	£120	£170	£220	Discretionary higher rate available
Doncaster	£115	£135	£175	£200 max. Discretionary payment
*Sheffield	£85	£185		Discretionary higher rate available
Barnsley	£50	£100	£190	£250 - £350 Higher rates
Rotherham	£25	£75	£150	£350 Fostering Plus

*Sheffield only advertises 2 skill levels

Table 2 - Comparison with Foster Care Network national research on fee levels

Skills Payment to Foster Carer per week	%
up to £200	45%
between £201 and £300	25%
between £301 and £450	20%
over £450	10%

Table 3 – Proposed Skill Fees

Basic Skill Level	Amount Per Week	Based On
Skill Level 1	£100	Per Carer
Skill Level 2	£125	Per Carer
Skill Level 3	£175	Per Carer

Payment for Children with complex needs

Placement Premium	£100	Per Child
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Table 4 – Short Break Care Scheme Rates

Authority	Day Costs	Evening/ Overnight Respite
Rotherham	£5.42 per hour	£2.71 per hour
Barnsley	£7.20 per hour	£7.20 per hour
Doncaster	£7.20 per hour *direct payment	* residential provision
Sheffield	£62.29 per day *dependant of carers skills levels and age of child	£15 subject to manger approval

Proposed

Authority	Day Costs	Evening/ Overnight Respite
Rotherham	£7.20	£30 per night

Wrap Around Care for Carers Offer	
Support Worker	£35,000
Support Worker Travel	£500
Recruitment Resource	£35,000
Out of Hours Support	£54,750
Training and fostering network membership	£30,000
TOTAL WRAP AROUND COST PER YEAR	£155,250

Estimate of National Minimum Payments

2016/17 National Minimum	National Minimum Rate Base (Weekly)	RMBC Base (Weekly)	Difference	%	Birthday (Annual)	Cultural Celebrations (Annual)	Holiday (Annual)
Babies	123.00	133.54	10.54	8.57%	121.85	182.77	243.70
Pre-Primary	126.00	133.54	7.54	5.98%	121.85	182.77	243.70
Primary	139.00	152.12	13.12	9.44%	137.98	206.97	275.96
Secondary 11-15	159.00	189.37	30.37	19.10%	168.09	252.13	336.17
Secondary 16-17	185.00	230.30	45.30	24.49%	206.25	309.39	412.51

Comparisons are at a base rate level. (Rotherham equivalent is Basic + pocket money + clothing)

Estimate of Skills & Placement Premium Payments

Skills Level	No of Carers 2017-18	Cost 2017-18	No of Carers 2018-19	Cost 2018-19	No of Carers 2019-20	Cost 2019-20
Skill Level 1	22	£114,400	22	£114,400	22	£114,400
Skill Level 2	26	£169,000	28	£182,000	29	£188,500
Skill Level 3	113	£1,028,300	126	£1,146,600	140	£1,274,000
Total	161	£1,311,700	176	£1,443,000	191	£1,576,900

Additions Per Child	Number of Children 2017-18	Cost 2017-18	Number of Children 2018-19	Cost 2018-19	Number of Children 2019-20	Cost 2019-20
Placement Premium	19	£271,700	34	£486,200	49	£700,700
Total	19	£271,700	34	£486,200	49	£700,700
TOTAL SKILLS & ADDITIONAL PAY		£1,583,400		£1,929,200		£2,277,600

APPENDIX 5

RMBC - Equality Analysis Form for Commissioning, Decommissioning, Decision making, Projects, Policies, Services, Strategies or Functions (CDDPPSSF)

<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexuality, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity. Page 6 of guidance. Other areas to note see guidance appendix 1</p>	
Name of policy, service or function. If a policy, list any associated policies:	Foster Carer Payment Support and Development
Name of service and Directorate	Children & Young People Service
Lead manager	Ian Walker
Date of Equality Analysis (EA)	August 2016
Names of those involved in the EA (Should include at least two other people)	Ian Walker, Anne-Marie Banks, Luke Ricketts
<p>Aim/Scope</p> <p>The aim of this analysis is to consider the impact of the proposed revised scheme of Foster Payments, Support and Development on those existing and potential carers with protected characteristics.</p> <p>This scheme seeks to improve the care experience for children in Rotherham by ensuring that wherever possible they are looked after in Rotherham in a family environment.</p> <p>Rotherham has a shortage of all foster care placements but particularly foster care placements for adolescents and larger sibling groups. As a result there are too many young people in placed in residential care and outside of the Borough boundary. This was commented upon in the Ofsted (2014) inspection when Children’s Social Care was judged to be ‘Inadequate’ and the following recommendation was made:</p> <p>“Improve the sufficiency of placements within the borough to meet current needs and strengthen the strategy so that good planning ensures enough places for the future.”</p> <p>In July 2016 Commissioners and Cabinet approved a formal consultation for a period of six weeks with foster carers regarding the rationale and options for a revised scheme with a view to that scheme being</p>	

implemented in October 2016. This consultation has been undertaken and the resulting report proposes a revised scheme for Rotherham based on providing financial incentive, good quality support and training to support the recruitment of new carers and the retention of existing ones. The proposals contained in the report will be an important enabler for the Council in meeting sufficiency of placement provision for Looked After Children and ensuring that wherever possible this provision is in a Rotherham foster family environment.

Alongside other initiatives, this will enable the reduction of overall placement costs and avoid use of more expensive Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and residential placements, through enhancing the support available to foster carers there should also be a reduction in placement disruptions and an improvement in outcomes achieved by young people given that placement stability is a key factor in enabling young people to achieve those good outcomes. It also follows that, wherever possible, children and young people should be placed within their own community which enables them to continue to have contact with the people and community of the most importance to them, thus promoting a strong sense of self, fundamental to resilience in later life.

Rotherham Borough Council has 442 children in care. Around 188 are placed with Rotherham Borough foster carers in 163 placements. This is a lower proportion than the majority of local authorities of a similar size. Rotherham has a shortage of all foster placements but particularly of placements for adolescents and for larger siblings groups. There are too many children and young people placed out of borough because there are not enough local placements.

The lack of sufficient foster placements means that Rotherham relies on the use of independent fostering agencies or residential provision, all of which are more costly with no guarantee of better outcomes being achieved.

What equality information is available? Include any engagement undertaken and identify any information gaps you are aware of. What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?

The recipients of this service are looked after children, living in foster care or with a care plan to move from residential care to foster care. As highlighted above there is a general shortfall of foster placements available but this is even more marked in respect of placements for adolescents. As a result a high number of these young people are placed with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) which can be some distance from the RMBC area.

In terms of the protected characteristics the following data is of some relevance :-

*Age Range	Number	Gender	Number	Ethnicity	Number
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20-30 yrs	7.00	Female	157.00	Asian - Indian	1.00
31-40 yrs	17.00	Male	6.00	Asian - Pakistani	2.00
41-50 yrs	54.00	Sum:	163.00	Black - African	1.00
51-60 yrs	54.00			Dual Heritage - White And Black Caribbean	1.00
61-70 yrs	26.00			White - British	158.00
70+ yrs	5.00			Sum:	163.00
Sum:	163.00				

Thus it can be seen that women are more likely to be affected by this proposed scheme than men and older people more likely to be affected than the younger age range. There are only 5 carers from a BME background who will be affected but this may actually be at least partially the result of shortfalls in the existing scheme and in the previous marketing strategy. There is now data held in respect of the disability, sexuality or religion of existing carers although none of these characteristics would automatically preclude a person from being approved as a foster carer.

Given that most of the foster carers are older and female then this protected characteristic stands to benefit the most from the scheme. In addition because people from a BME background are more likely to be economically disadvantaged than their peers the enhanced remuneration this proposed scheme offers may not only increase the interest in fostering from the BME community but it may also contribute to addressing the economic disadvantage in that community. This in turn may ensure that the cultural, religious and racial needs of looked after children from minority ethnic groups are better met.

Should it be approved the proposed scheme will become a core part of the foster carer marketing campaign and be included in all recruitment materials including on the RMBC website. This should ensure that all relevant people will be able to understand how they will benefit from the scheme.

Engagement & Consultation

It would be impractical to consult with each of the young people individually regarding the proposed revised scheme. However, their views regarding their placement location can be discerned via the Care Planning process. It is also a reasonable assumption to make that the significant majority of these young people would, given the choice, express a preference to have a foster placement in the Rotherham area from where they could maintain consistency in terms of contact with their birth family, education, peer friendships and social networks.

However, there have been three full consultation events with foster carers held on 2nd November 2015, 22nd April and 29th July 2016. In total 121 foster carers attended these events although some carers may have attended more than one event. These events were held in a variety of locations across the Borough to ensure maximum attendance and an accurate reflection of the views of the in-house foster carer population. Once the first draft of the proposed scheme had been formulated there was a further focus group convened on the 11th August consisting of 10 carers in which the proposed model was reviewed and refined. As a result the proposed scheme has been very much framed with the input of the foster carers themselves

Engagement/consultation undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)

The foster carers consulted expressed some dissatisfaction with the existing Foster Carer Allowance Scheme which had not been reviewed since 2014. In terms of a revised scheme they expressed that it should be:-

- Easy to understand and transparent to implement.
- In addition to the financial incentives there should be a focus on the less tangible benefits including good quality support and relevant training and development.
- A scheme that promoted both the retention of existing carers but also the recruitment of new carers.
- They also liked the *concept* of the existing skills based payments scheme as they felt that this promoted the notion of a career development within fostering and encouraged access to training.
- However, they felt the current skills based scheme had incremental increases in the payment levels that were too steep at the higher levels and they requested that the starting level was proportionally increased so as to increase the attraction for prospective new foster carers.
- They also requested that there was some additional financial recognition for those foster carers who looked after those young people who presented some increased challenges including large sibling groups, adolescents, children with a disability or young people who had had a number of previous placement disruptions. This has been included in the report and referred to as the 'Placement Premium'

The Analysis

How do you think the Service meets the needs of different communities and groups?

The aim of the fostering service is to provide as many foster placements as possible for the 442 looked after young people currently in the care of Rotherham MBC. However, there continues to be a significant shortfall in that at present there are only 188 such placements available. This has significant financial

implications for RMBC given that the IFA placements can cost more than twice as much as in-house placements. In addition, by being placed outside of the RMBC area it can be more challenging to ensure that the health, education, therapeutic and social needs of these young people are best met. This can often be dependent on the prioritisation criteria in other local authorities which can mean our young people having to wait for a service.

Despite the increased costs that these placements incur there is no evidence to indicate that they are any less likely to disrupt than in-house placements. Further to that most of the looked after young people gravitate back to their home area as they approach adulthood which can present additional challenges in terms of developing social networks from scratch and in terms of supporting them to access employment, education or training opportunities.

All of these factors would indicate that the needs of our looked after young people would be better met by an enhanced and increased in-house fostering provision.

Given the significant shortfall in the number of in-house foster carers and the lack of any significant increase despite the existing marketing campaigns it is reasonable to assume that the existing scheme fails to some extent to meet the needs of those people living in Rotherham who may be considering becoming a foster carer . In addition through the consultation events it has become increasingly clear that it also fails to meet the needs of the existing fostering community.

Analysis of the actual or likely effect of the Service:

Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Group?

Does the Service/Policy provide any improvements/remove barriers?

It is not envisaged that the proposed scheme will present any barriers or problems to any particular community or group. In fact the scheme has been designed to encourage and facilitate access. By increasing the allowances, training and support available to all foster carers the barriers to becoming a foster carer should be reduced to some degree.

The proposed scheme has been fully communicated with the foster carer community via a number of consultation sessions, a review focus group and via the newsletters sent to all carers on a quarterly basis by the Fostering Service. There will be a further discussion of the proposals with carers at the Foster Carer Forum on the 23rd September 2016.

What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations? Identify by protected characteristics

It is not envisaged that there will be any impact on community relations or impact on community cohesion. However, in terms of the specific foster carers community there may in fact be greater cohesion given that the proposed scheme has been deemed by them to be fairer and more equitable than the existing scheme. The Ward location of existing carers is set out below:-

Hoover	2
Wath	4
Swinton	3
Rawmarsh	8
Silverwood	9
Valley	6
Boston Castle	8
Rotherham East	9
Rotherham West	9
Keppel	5
Wingfield	8
Wickersley	8
Hellaby	3
Maltby	7
Dinnington	11
Anston and Woodsetts	5
Wales	4
Holderness	10
Rother Vale	12
Sitwell	8

Brinsworth and Catcliffe	6
Rotherham Borough	145
Borough:	
Barnsley	2
Doncaster	10
Sheffield	5
Windsor	1
Borough Total	18

As can be seen there is a reasonable spread of foster carers across the Borough with Dinnington, Holderness and Rother Vale having the most foster carers in their Wards. The low numbers involved would suggest that the impact of the proposed scheme on any particular Ward above the other Wards will not be significant.

By increasing the allowances paid to all existing and new foster carers there is a projected increase in costs amounting to £1.3m in 2016/17 to £1.6m in 2019/20. However, over this period the number of available carers is anticipated to rise from 146 to 191 and the differential in costs between in-house and IFA payments will significantly reduce this projected increase.

There are only two possible alternative options to the proposed scheme; either the existing scheme can remain in place or an alternative scheme needs to be developed and consulted upon. However, the consultations that have already taken place would indicate that the proposed scheme is broadly in line with the expressed wishes and feelings of the community it has been designed to support. As a result there seems to be little value in proposing an alternative scheme at this stage.