

Record of Delegated Executive Decision(s)

1. Subject of decision

Foster Carer's Accredited fee increase.

2. Name and Title of Decision Maker

Julie Firth, Director of Children's Services

3. Details of any Conflict of Interest and any Dispensation granted in

None

4. Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Director of Children's Services to the proposed increase to the current Accredited Foster Carers' fee from £110 to £220. This is the lowest paid fee to our foster carers.

The Authority has faced significant challenge in recruiting sufficient numbers of Foster Carers to meet the needs of the Borough, in particular Foster Carers skilled at caring for teenagers, and Foster Carers who are skilled at caring for sibling groups. Set against this challenging need, the Authority is recruiting in a competitive marketplace where other Local Authorities and Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA'S) are also actively recruiting residents within the Borough.

A refresh of the Fostering Strategy was completed in 2022 to ensure we were offering a competitive financial package of support by aligning the Authority's fostering allowances to the Government's recommended levels. This refresh also introduced a second child fee of £75 for carers to support them to care for more than one child and for each child thereafter. However the strategy did not alter the main 3 fee bands paid to each fostering household.

This proposal is to align the level 2 fee from £110 to £220 per week. This would bridge the gap between the Pre accredited zero payment and the Advanced banding of £380 and be more attractive when recruiting new carers to the Authority enabling the Authority to remain competitive in recruitment and retention of existing foster carers.

5. Alternative Options Considered

Do not increase the accredited foster carer's fee of £110 to £220.

6. Decision(s)

Director of Children's Services: -

- (1) Agrees to the proposed increase to the current Accredited Foster Carers' fee from £110 to £220.

The total costs of this are as follows:

	Current carer households on accredited band 2	Weekly cost	Costs if aligned to £220 weekly	Difference annually (56 weeks)
Band 2 Mainstream	21	£2,310	£4,620	£129,360
Band 2 Kinship	56	£6,160	£12,320	£344,960
Totals	77	£8,470	£16,940	£474,320

The total cost has been factored into the medium-term financial plan.

7. Reasons for the Decision(s)

In line with the justifications set out in the Delegated Decision report, in the main to try and improve sufficiency of foster care arrangements for our children in care, I agree with this recommendation.

8. Date decision made

20 May 2025

9. Is this decision subject to call-in and if so expiry date of call-in period

5pm on 29 May 2025

10. Date of Publication

21 May 2025

11. Implementation Date (if decision not called in)

29 May 2025