

To: HOUSING AND SOCIAL WORK SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: FEES, ALLOWANCES AND PAYMENTS 2008/2009 : ADOPTION, FOSTERING, SUPPORTED CARERS AND CARE LEAVERS.
From: HEAD OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES/CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER		
Date: 20 AUGUST 2008	Ref: JM/NL	

1. Purpose of Report/Introduction

To seek approval of revised adoption allowances, fostering fees and allowances, supported carer payments and financial support to care leavers for the financial year 2008/2009.

2. Background

- 2.1 Historically, the council has increased the above allowances each year in line with the increase recommended by COSLA.
- 2.2 In 2006/07, COSLA decided to stop recommending a rate and leave it to individual local authorities to decide what rate is appropriate, taking into account each local authority operates within different circumstances.

3. Proposals / Considerations

3.1 It is proposed that all payments for 2008/09 be increased by 2.5% in line with inflation.

3.2 Adoption Allowances

3.2.1 Adoption allowances are paid to support specific children who are placed for adoption through the adoption service of the council.

3.2.2 The allowance is awarded under specified criteria normally:

- a child who has significant additional needs or may develop significant needs in the future
- to maintain a sibling group
- to secure a placement with an existing carer when the child has a strong bond and an important relationship with that carer.

3.2.3 The following adoption allowances are proposed:

Ages	2007/2008 Rate	Proposed Rate 2008/2009
0 - 4	£68.99	£70.71
5 - 10	£85.62	£87.76
11 - 15	£106.58	£109.24

16 - 18 £138.00 £141.45

3.3 Fostering Allowances

3.3.1 Fostering allowance is paid to individuals and families who are registered as foster carers under the Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 when a child, who is looked after accommodated by the council, is placed in their home.

3.3.2 The allowance is awarded to meet the costs of the child they are caring for, and is paid in relation to the age of the child. As previously agreed by the committee, it reflects the minimum rate recommended by the Fostering Network (the national organisation supporting foster carers).

3.3.3 The following fostering allowances are proposed :

Ages	2007/2008 Rate	Proposed Rate 2008 / 2009
0 - 4	£118.60	£121.57
5 - 10	£135.10	£138.48
11 - 15	£168.18	£172.38
16 - 18	£204.55	£209.66

3.4 Fostering Fees

3.4.1 Fostering fees are paid to individuals and families who are registered as foster carers under the Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996 when a child, who is looked after and accommodated by the council, is placed in their home.

3.4.2 The fee is paid as part of the foster carer competency scheme, which recognises the knowledge and skills which foster carers invest in the care they provide to children and young people. This scheme was approved by Social Work Committee in May 2006.

3.4.3 The different fee levels reflect the skill level attained by the foster carer(s).

3.4.4 The following fostering fees are proposed in 2008 :

	Current Rate 2007/2008	Proposed Rate 2008/2009
Level 1	£100/week/child	£102.50
Level 2	£130	£133.25
Level 3	£160	£164.00

3.5 Supported Carer Allowances

3.5.1 Supported Carer allowances are paid to individuals and families who are registered as supported carers under the Regulation for Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and who have been approved as supported carers by the Adoption, Fostering and Family Placement Panel.

3.5.2 The allowance is paid in respect of the care and support provided to a young person who resides with them as part of their throughcare support plan.

3.5.3 The following supported carer allowance is proposed in 2008/09 :

	2007/2008Rate	Proposed Rate 2008 / 2009
16-21 years	£250	£256.25

3.6 Financial Support to Care Leavers

3.6.1 Under the Regulation for Care (Scotland) Act 2001, local authorities have the duty to provide financial support to young people who have been accommodated for 13 weeks and who left care at the age of 16.

3.6.2 Eligible young people no longer receive financial support from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) until they are 18 years of age.

3.6.3 The Regulations stipulate that the financial package of support should not be less than the equivalent of the DWP benefits available to 16 and 17 year olds.

3.6.4 The proposed increase in basic rates of financial support from 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009 will be:

Type of Placement	Amount		Comment
	Rate 2007/2008	Proposed Rate 2008/2009	
Basic Living Allowance	£46.85	£47.95	Payable to young people not at work/school/college/training course
Life Improvement Allowance	£10.00	£10.00	Payable as a top up to the basic allowance if a young person is engaging in pre-vocational activities that do not offer training allowances.
Living Allowance – On Training Scheme	£10.00-£26.00	£45.00- £50.00	Payable as a top-up to Training Allowance paid by training provider, to a maximum of £105 per week.
Living Allowance – At school/college	£26.00	£57.00	Payable as a top-up to ensure the same income as someone on a training scheme.
Emergency Payment	£250.00	£250.00	This would be the maximum amount, spread over a year, to cover unexpected expenses such as bills, accessed in agreement with Pathways Co-ordinator.

3.6.5 The proposed increases in 2008 reflect the Council's aspiration for improvements in outcomes for care leavers who require support to be in further education, training and employment.

3.6.6 Work is underway in developing a multi-agency strategy for care leavers, and this may result in future changes to procedures and practice, which will be reported to committee at a future date.

3.6.7 In addition to these allowances, under the regulations, Housing and Social Work Services will continue to offer care and exercise duties and powers in terms of Section 29 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 for clothing allowances, education experiences, bus passes, leisure activity and furnishing a tenancy.

3.7 Definition of Link Care Allowance

- 3.71 Link carer allowance is paid in exceptional circumstances to support children to remain in the care of a relative when the child cannot be supported and maintained within the immediate family.
- 3.72 The allowance is awarded when a family requires financial support to assist them to provide a home for a child or young person and prevent them being accommodated by the Council.

Link Care Allowance

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Current Rate 2007 / 2008</u>	<u>Proposed Rate 2008/2009</u>
0 - 4	£24.77	£25.39
5 - 10	£30.74	£31.51
11 - 15	£38.26	£39.22
16 - 18	£49.54	£50.78

- 3.73 Link carer allowances are currently subject to review due to the implementation of the National Fostering & Kinship Care Strategy, which is the subject of a separate report to Committee.

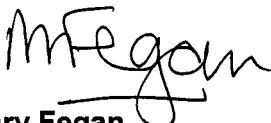
4. Financial / Personnel / Legal / Policy Implications

The increase for the above allowances, fees and financial supports will be met from existing budgets

5. Recommendation

5.1 Committee is asked to :

- approve the new rates for 2008/2009 detailed in section 3 with effect from 1 April 2008 and;
- Otherwise note the contents of the report.



Mary Fegan
Head of Social work Services/
Chief Social Work Officer
7 August 2008