

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF A NON-KEY OFFICER DECISION CHILDREN'S WELLBEING DIRECTORATE

ITEM:	Increase in basic foster carers allowance 2017																		
Officer Title:	Director for children's wellbeing																		
Date of Decision:	29 June 2017																		
Purpose:	To approve an increase in the foster carers basic fostering allowance of 1%.																		
Decision:	an increase of 1% is made across the age ranges for all Herefordshire foster placements with effect from 1st April 2017																		
Reasons for the Decision:	<p>In April each year the DfE issues recommended guidelines for foster carers. The council did not fully implement these recommendations for four years following the implementation of the fee payment scheme which has led to some of our foster care allowances falling behind recommended rates.</p> <p>The 2017 recommended DfE increase is 1.014% detailed below (inclusive of clothing, holiday and festival allowances) and is made across all age ranges and loosely linked to inflation:</p> <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td>Babies/toddlers</td> <td>£128</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Primary</td> <td>£141</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Secondary</td> <td>£161</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16-17 yrs</td> <td>£188</td> </tr> </table> <p>The impact of the 1% increase in Herefordshire is illustrated below and is also inclusive of clothing, festival and holiday allowances:</p> <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">With 1% increase: increase:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Current rate without increase:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Babies/toddlers £127</td> <td>£123.48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Primary aged £144</td> <td>£138.05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Secondary aged £202</td> <td>£199.21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16 – 17 year olds £241</td> <td>£237.67</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The increase in allowances will allow the youngest age bands to gradually catch up as no increase was recommended by the DfE last year.</p>	Babies/toddlers	£128	Primary	£141	Secondary	£161	16-17 yrs	£188	With 1% increase: increase:	Current rate without increase:	Babies/toddlers £127	£123.48	Primary aged £144	£138.05	Secondary aged £202	£199.21	16 – 17 year olds £241	£237.67
Babies/toddlers	£128																		
Primary	£141																		
Secondary	£161																		
16-17 yrs	£188																		
With 1% increase: increase:	Current rate without increase:																		
Babies/toddlers £127	£123.48																		
Primary aged £144	£138.05																		
Secondary aged £202	£199.21																		
16 – 17 year olds £241	£237.67																		
Consultation:	The foster carer representative group have been consulted and mileage claims have been scrutinised: consultation work was undertaken following the 2016 annual foster carer forum with further work planned for 2017/18 to consider other aspects of allowances such as clothing and holiday later in the year. Foster carers understand the financial pressures within council budgets but are also																		

	managing household finance pressures arising from inflation and so would appreciate this being recognised by a small uplift in their allowances.
Options Considered:	<p>Not to increase allowances. This is not recommended as it would mean that the council does not meet with the Department of Education guidelines (DfE).</p> <p>Increase the allowance to the youngest age bands only at a higher level of 3%. This is not recommended because it would adversely affect the care placement strategy which aims to attract and retain carers for the older and more challenging placements. This helps to reduce dependence on independent fostering agencies for this cohort. The council does not have as much difficulty in recruiting foster carers for the younger children under 11 years.</p>
Declaration of Interest:	None

Officer Name: Chris Baird

Officer Title: Director for children's wellbeing

Signature:

Date: 29 June 2017