



Education and Social Care

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APPENDIX I

Hello!

Welcome to the proposal for a new fostering service in Moray. The proposal sets out the thinking behind the need for a new scheme and the proposal takes you through the 4 levels of skills that our carers who foster for Moray Council will have/ be expected to evidence, as part of their role in caring for children and young people.

This is the beginning of a consultation period, which will extend over a period of 6 weeks to enable all to take part. We will use these comments to revisit what is proposed and make recommendation to move forward. The outcome of consultation will be reported by to all who take part.

Consultation period 29 June 2018-10 Aug 2018 all communication should be sent to - morayfosteringscheme@moray.gov.uk Gil Nicol, Carole Carthew and Jennifer Gordon have access.

Group and individual sessions available for discussion / points of clarification – all sessions will be held at Rose Cottage Elgin, unless by specific request, please book a session via the mail box and indicate if you are happy to be part of a group or require an individual session. The following is the timetable of activity:-

29 June - consultation documents circulated to all by email (where possible) and by mail.	
Monday 2 July	2pm to 4pm
Thursday 5 July 1-4pm	1pm – 4pm
Monday 9 July	10.30am - 12 noon
Thursday 12	10am - 12 noon
Wed 18 July	1pm - 3pm
Monday 6 Aug	1pm - 3pm
Friday 10 Aug – consultation ends	
Monday 13 August mail box closes	12 noon
Tuesday 14 write up findings from consultation	
Thurs 16 August feedback to carers	10am to 12 noon
Thurs 16 August feedback to other stakeholders, carers are welcome	2pm-3pm
Monday 20 August – re- write for final version	
Wednesday 22 August – write committee report	
Wednesday 27 September Committee	
September – December mapping of profiles and development of Skills framework.	
January – April – ensure all in place for new financial year.	

We look of forward to hearing your comments on the proposed scheme

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Gordon **Carole Carthew**

Enc(s):

Proposed New Moray Fostering Scheme Information and Consultation Paper

The aims of the proposed new scheme are to: -

- Promote the recruitment of new foster carers at all levels
- Promote the recruitment of new foster carers who will provide long term and permanent care to children who may; -
 - (i) Be part of a sibling group;
 - (ii) Be older and
 - (iii) Have complex needs which can be reflected in their behaviour
- Ensure the retention of existing foster carers, within the new scheme
- Recognise and seek to respond to the increasingly complex needs of children
- Recognise the demanding nature of modern fostering within the context of the learning framework and standards for foster care
- Deliver extended training and development opportunities for foster carers
- Provide choice and quality for children who need foster placements

The proposed new Moray Fostering Scheme would include: -

- Clarity re skills - criteria
- Opportunities for foster carers to advance through four levels
- Opportunities to achieve SVQ qualifications
- Learning reflecting the Standard for foster care 2017
- Increased support when children with more complex needs are placed
- Payment of foster care fees for level of skills

In the current scheme:

Carers move from skills base Level 1 to Level 2 when they complete the mandatory core training. Level 3 is only available to those carers who wish to provide permanent foster care and Level 4, our Choices carers, have been recruited specifically for that Choices role.

The proposed development:

The proposed structure will support carers to move through the levels based on assessed evidence of the increased and developing skills, experience and ability to meet children's needs. Evidence will be gathered through supervision with link social workers, use of reflective practice, group discussions and by gathering evidence for a portfolio.

There will be no requirement to move through the skill levels. Carers can elect to deliver at Level 2: it is expected that carers will not remain at Level 1.

Levels 3 and 4 can be achieved in one of two ways: -

1. Carers wishing to progress to Levels 3 and 4 must be committed to delivering consistently high levels of care and to provide care for children who may have greater needs or display more complex behaviours. They must show understanding of those behaviours which may be rooted in trauma and evidence through their practice that they can support children and young people accordingly. Support for these placements will be more closely monitored and individual packages of support will be provided based on assessed and agreed need. For some of these, Placement Services will provide the childcare social work role and may also include increased support worker time and access to peer support.
- 2.
3. There will be times when Placement Services will specifically recruit to Levels 3 and 4 to meet the needs of children and young people for whom long term/ permanent care will be required and for children who have complex and challenging needs. Specific recruitment will include an intensive assessment process and carers progressing through advanced training prior to matching. Carers will work as part of a team within placement services.

The proposed Foster Carer Career Development Structure

An outline of the skills levels are as follows.

Level 1

- Will apply to all newly approved foster carers (excluding specific recruitment)
- Carers must participate in mandatory post approval training which will include child protection and safer caring
- Linked to learning in pre-approval or induction stage of Standard for Foster Care
- Evidence of knowledge gathered and presented to 1st Annual Review
- Carers participate in regular planned supervision with their allocated Placement Services Social worker
- With support Carers will contribute to Looked after Child reviews/ children's hearings/ child protection case conferences
- Show understanding of the importance of birth family links
- Carers should show that they are aware of the impact of decisions which may challenge their views and be able, with support to accept and promote the Care Plan for the child

Level 2

- Carers have completed all Level 1 development tasks and have evidenced their learning
- Carers have completed Post Approval training and learning linked to post-approval stage of Standard for Foster Care
- Skills development continues by attending training and by reflective practice with Placement Services Social Worker
- Regularly have children /young people in placement
- Develop and build on skills learned including carrying out tasks appropriately from the Child's Care Plan.
- Carers should be able to manage personal/professional dilemmas constructively
- Carers can advocate constructively for a child without close support.
- Carers at this level may provide long term or permanent care for children whose needs present as being less complex subject to review.

Level 3

- Carers have completed all Level 2 development tasks and have evidenced their learning
- Carers are willing to care for children with more complex needs/behaviours including older children/ sibling groups
- Carers demonstrate resilience in dealing with potentially challenging situations
- Carers actively contribute to the development of less experienced carers
- High level of flexibility to meet the needs of children placed
- Show active engagement in learning and development and can demonstrate this in their practice
- Demonstrate understanding of complex behaviours in children and young people
- Be able to evidence their practice as outlined in the Standard for Foster Care
- Willing to attend meetings of Level 3 and 4 carers as required

Level 4

- Carers have completed all Level 3 development tasks and have evidenced their learning
- Carers will care for the children and young people who display the most complex behaviours/needs including older children
- There must be justifiable reason if carers refuse to care for a child when a match is considered appropriate
- Carers must be committed to maintaining placements through the most challenging periods
- One carer should not have work outside the home, to meet the needs of the placement , availability to attend meetings
- Carers will evidence commitment to sharing and developing their skills with other carers
- Must be available to attend meeting of Level 4 carers on a monthly basis

Details of evidence required and process of moving through levels will be in line with Standard for Foster Care: carers will be active in drawing together a framework for evidence. More detail will be found in the guidance to the skills levels which we are currently developing.

Finance

All children will attract levels of allowances as at present regardless of which fee option is adopted.

Option 1

Remain as is.

This is not the preferred option given changes in fostering over the years since the current scheme was created. The current scheme has been in place since 2004 and is no longer sufficiently responsive to the needs of Moray's children and young people who require family based care, with carers who are able to work with challenges and more complexities. Audits over the years have shown that placements of older children, sibling groups and children displaying more complex needs have been less likely to be placed with Moray carers. This resulted in placements being made with residential care providers and with independent foster carers. Moray has skilled foster carers and the proposed scheme aims to recognise them. The basis of revision of the scheme is to meet the needs of children in Moray and to identify and acknowledge and develop the skills of our carers.

Option 2

To set and agree a fee per household.

The approximate fees – subject to consultation and being alert to the need for Committee approval for any revision to the existing scheme - may be:

Level 1 - £8,000

Level 2 - £10,000

Level 3 - £16,000

Level 4 - £23,000

In option 2 the fee per household would not be dependent on numbers of children/young people placed. Fees will be paid weekly in arrears. This fee would also apply if any of the young people moved through to Continuing Care.

Short Breaks – 28 days of short break/respite will be part of the scheme. During short breaks within Option 2 the main carer will retain their fee but allowances for the child will transfer to the carer providing the short break. Any change to the 28 day short break allowance will be negotiated on a case by case basis on the needs of the child/young person.

If a carer exceeds the 28 day allowance and this has not been previously negotiated then no fee will be paid for the excess days.

There will be an expectation that children who are placed on a long term/permanent basis will accompany their carer on a holiday at some point in the year.

A retainer fee to remain in place for two weeks at the end of placements for levels one and two carers, if no other child is in placement and providing the carer remains available.

Retainer fee to remain in place for four weeks at end of placement for level 3 and 4 carers if no other child is in placement and providing the carer remains available for placements or to support other carers as required.

Finances Option 3

Core fee plus increments for two or more children placed

	Core fee	1 child	2 children	3 children
Level 1	5000	0	6000	10000
Level 2	7000	0	6000	10000
Level 3	14000	0	6000	10000
Level 4	23000	0	6000	10000

Retainer of core fee is to remain in place for two weeks at end of placement for levels one and two carers, if no other child in placement and providing carer remain available for placements.

Retainer of core fee to remain in place for four weeks at end of placement for level 3 & 4 carers if no other child in placement and providing carer remains available for placements or to support other carers as required.

Short Breaks – 28 days of short break/respice will be part of the scheme. During short breaks the main carer will retain their core fee but allowances for the child will transfer to the carer providing the short break. Any change to the 28 day short break allowance will be negotiated on a case by case basis on the needs of the child/young person.

If a carer exceeds the 28 day allowance for short breaks and this has not been previously negotiated then no fee will be paid for the days in excess days.

There will be an expectation that children who are placed on a long term/permanent basis will accompany their carer on a holiday at some point in the year.

Out of Hours support would be provided by the Out of Hours social work team as is the case for mainstream carers at present. Any specific packages of support alongside this will be negotiated on a case by case basis on assessed need.

The following is a comparison of how the different proposals relate to the current financial arrangements. There may be individual anomalies for carers and these will be discussed on a case by case basis.

		Existing	Option 2	Option 3	Difference
Level	Children	Total	Total	Total	Total
1	1	4,469.92	8,000	5,000	530.08
2	1	7,450.04	10,000	7,000	-450.04
2	2	13,037.44	10,000	13,000	-37.44
2	3	16,762.20	10,000	17,000	237.8
3	1	10,431.72	16,000	14,000	3568.28
3	2	18,255.12	16,000	20,000	1744.88
3	3	23,470.72	16,000	24,000	529.28
4	1	23,091.64	23,000	23,000	-91.64
4	2	23,091.64	23,000	29,000	5908.36

Foster Carers Questionnaire
Proposed Changes to Moray Foster Care Scheme

1. To what extent do you agree with the thinking behind the need to revisit the existing foster scheme? Please use the following ratings.				
1-Strongly Disagree	2-Disagree	3-No Opinion	4-Agree	5-Strongly Agree
Comments				
Skills				
2. The scheme sets out the basic outline of the skill levels. Are these clear and understandable? Yes / No (please indicate)				
Comments				
3. To what extent do you agree with the skills levels?				
1-Strongly Disagree	2-Disagree	3-No Opinion	4-Agree	5-Strongly Agree
4. Are there amendments you would suggest or points you believe should be clarified?				
Learning & Development				
5. Are you aware of the standard for foster care? Yes / No (please indicate)				
If yes please indicate your awareness				
1-Limited	2-Basic	3-Intermediate	4-Comprehensive	5-Indepth
6. The levels outlined in the proposed scheme tie to knowledge, experience and understanding. Do you agree that this is appropriate?				
1-Strongly Disagree	2-Disagree	3-No Opinion	4-Agree	5-Strongly Agree
7. Do you welcome the opportunity for support to gain (further) SVQs (achieving SVQs is not mandatory) Yes / No				
8. To what extent do you agree that there is clarity in how to progress through the skills levels?				
1-Strongly Disagree	2-Disagree	3-No Opinion	4-Agree	5-Strongly Agree
9. To what extent do you agree that supervision will support you in this new scheme?				

1-Strongly Disagree	2-Disagree	3-No Opinion	4-Agree	5-Strongly Agree
10. To what extent do you agree with the plan to develop peer support?				
1-Strongly Disagree	2-Disagree	3-No Opinion	4-Agree	5-Strongly Agree
11. To what extent do you welcome the opportunities to engage with peer and group support?				
12. The experience of group support for current choices carers in the main has been positive. If this method was developed what do you think the strengths would be?				
13. Please outline any concerns you may have?				
Finance				
14. To what extent do you feel the three options were made clear?				
1-Strongly Disagree	2-Disagree	3-No Opinion	4-Agree	5-Strongly Agree
15. Please indicate any points you would appreciate clarification on.				
16 Is there clarity re the fee structure? (There will be no change to allowances). Yes / No (please indicate)				
17 Are there concerns you would like to outline? If so please note.				
18 What do you see as being positives?				
19 Short breaks retention. Which of the three proposals do you favour and why? 1 2 3 (please indicate)				
20. What impact do you consider either option 2 or option 3 will have on the numbers of children carers may be willing to care for?				
21. Do you consider that change to the scheme may impact on you offering foster care? Yes / No (please indicate)				
22. Do you have a view on whether this might positively attract skilled foster carers? Yes / No (please indicate)				

23.

Please rate your support for each proposed option

Rating 1-5- 1 being not in support of the proposal as outlined and 5 being very much in support

	1	2	3	4	5
Option 1					
Option 2					
Option 3					

24.

Transition and implementation

To what extent do you agree that the proposed time frame is reasonable and appropriate?

1-Strongly Disagree	2-Disagree	3-No Opinion	4-Agree	5-Strongly Agree
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25.

Any comments?

Thank you for completing the survey. If you have any questions or would like further information please contact your supervising social worker.

Foster Scheme Fees

		Existing	Option 2	Option 3	Other LA	FC
Level	Children	Total	Total			
1	1	4,469.92	8,000	5,000	8500	5750
2	1	7,450.04	10,000	7,000	11600	11500
2	2	13,037.44	10,000	13,000	13700	11500
2	3	16,762.20	10,000	17,000	15800	11500
3	1	10,431.72	16,000	14,000	19000	17250
3	2	18,255.12	16,000	20,000	21000	17250
3	3	23,470.72	16,000	24,000	22000	17250
4	1	23,091.64	23,000	23,000	NA	23000
4	2	23,091.64	23,000	29,000	NA	23000