

9 March 2015**Agenda Item: 12****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE****PROVISION OF FURTHER FUNDING FOR ADAPTATIONS TO LOCAL
AUTHORITY FOSTER HOMES****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks approval for further funding totalling £26,100 for adaptations to three Local Authority foster homes.

Information and Advice

2. Funding totalling £113,000 for adaptations to three Local Authority foster carers' homes was approved as part of a report to Children and Young People's Committee on 29 September 2014. Further funding is now requested as detailed below.
3. KOD and PP are approved foster carers who foster a family member. The fostered child's care plan is one of long term fostering with KOD and PP. Additional bedroom and living space needs to be created in the foster home to secure this child's care plan. £30,000 was identified as required for an extension to the foster carers' property. The need for an extension was actively promoted by the child's Independent Reviewing Officer and was supported by the child's social care team.
4. Funding of £30,000 was approved by the Children and Young People's Committee on 29 September 2014.
5. Due to an oversight the figure of £30,000 was not inclusive of Value Added Tax (20%). An additional sum of £6,000 is required in order for the building works to be completed.
6. There is sufficient capacity within this financial year in the Access to Resources Management budget to meet the request in respect of KOD and PP.
7. JT and CT are approved foster carers who are currently caring for a sibling group of three children. The children were placed with the foster carers on a short term basis but their care plan has been changed to one of long term fostering with JT and CT. Additional bathroom and living space needs to be created in the foster home to secure these children's care plans.
8. Funding of £35,000 was approved by the Children and Young People's Committee on 29 September 2014.

9. Due to an administrative error the figure of £35,000 was incorrect. An additional sum of £18,100 is required in order for the building works to be completed as the full cost is £53,100.
10. There is sufficient capacity within this financial year in the Access to Resources Management budget to meet the request in respect of JT and CT.
11. JJ and PJ are approved foster carers who are currently caring for KC. KC's sibling, PC, is currently living in residential care and the Local Authority's care plan is to reunite the siblings in the care of JJ and PJ. An adaptation to the foster carers' property is required to create the necessary bedroom and living space.
12. Funding of £48,000 was approved by the Children and Young People's Committee on 29 September 2014. (This approval was given in respect of another child, CW. The plan for CW to live with the foster carers has not been achieved). There has been a slight increase in the building costs and an additional sum of £2,000 is required in order for the building works to be completed.
13. There is sufficient capacity within this financial year in the Access to Resources Management budget to meet the request in respect of JJ and PJ.
14. There is a strong culture of permanency and sustainability within the care planning processes for children in the Local Authority's care. To ensure placement stability and positive outcomes for fostered children the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that its children live in an environment that meets the children's immediate and future needs. It is important that foster carers are supported in maintaining a good level of physical and emotional resilience and that the emergence of stresses and strains, arising from restricted physical space within a foster household, are prevented. The process by which adaptation requests are considered is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Other Options Considered

15. Not applicable.

Reason for Recommendation

16. The Local Authority, through its care planning processes for its looked after children, considers it appropriate for the child placed with KOD and PP to remain in their long term care. To support the achievement of its own care plan the Local Authority has already agreed expenditure of £30,000 to finance an adaptation to KOD and PP's property. The amount of £30,000 was not inclusive of Value Added Tax (20%). To be inclusive of this tax, a further £6,000 is recommended for payment.
17. Similarly, the Local Authority, through its care planning processes, considers it appropriate for a sibling group of three children to remain in the long term care of JT and CT. To support the achievement of its own care plan the Local Authority has already agreed expenditure of £35,000 to finance an adaptation to JT and CT's property. The amount of £35,000 was incorrectly requested. The full cost is £53,100 and therefore a further £18,100 is recommended for payment.

18. The Local Authority considers it appropriate for KC and PC to be reunited in foster care and to be placed with JJ and PJ. To achieve its own care plan, an adaptation to the foster carers' property is required. The Local Authority has already agreed an amount of £48,000 in this regard. The full amount is £50,000 and therefore a further £2,000 is recommended for payment.
19. Standard 10, the national minimum standards for fostering (2011) requires that " the foster home can comfortably accommodate all who live there...children live in foster homes that provide adequate space... each child over the age of three years should have her/his own bedroom...". The request, for an adaptation to this foster household, will ensure compliance with this standard.

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

21. The service user is a looked after child. By supporting existing placement arrangements for looked after children, the potential for continued placement stability will be enhanced.

Financial Implications

22. There is sufficient budget capacity within this year's Access to Resources Management budget to meet these requests.

Human Rights Implications

23. A child's right to family life is enhanced when the Local Authority has sufficient and sustainable family placement provision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) approval is given to provide further funding of £6,000 for an adaptation to a Local Authority foster home to foster carers KOD and PP. Standard legal charges upon the foster carers' property will apply to protect the Local Authority
- 2) approval is given to provide further funding of £18,100 for an adaptation to a Local Authority foster home to foster carers JT and CT. Standard legal charges upon the foster carers' property will apply to protect the Local Authority
- 3) approval is given to provide further funding of £2,000 for an adaptation to a Local Authority foster home to foster carers JJ and PJ. A legal charge upon the foster carers' property will apply to protect the Local Authority.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 16/02/15)

24. The Children and Young People's Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (LCJ 17/02/15)

25. The financial implications of this report are set out in paragraph 22 above.

26. £24,100 of these costs are included in period 10's budget forecast, the remaining £2,000 will be included in period 11.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Provision of funding for adaptations to Local Authority foster homes – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 29 September 2014

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0593