



Meeting of East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership	Integration Joint Board	
Held on	26 June 2024	
Agenda Item	12	
Title	Finance and Policy Implications for Foster Care, Kinship and Adoption in relation to Scottish recommended allowances	
Summary		
<p>This report provides an overview of the Scottish Government implementation of the Scottish Recommended Allowances (SRA) which impacts our foster care, kinship and adoption fees and allowances.</p>		
Presented by	Raymond Prior, Head of Children's Service and Justice (Chief Social Work Officer)	
Action Required		
<p>The Integration Joint Board is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the impact of legislative and policy change for the Health and Social Care Partnership and East Renfrewshire Council. • Approve the revised fostering, kinship and adoption fees and allowances which have been reviewed in line with the Scottish Recommended Allowances (SRA). • Approve the Continuing Care and Supported Care allowances. 		
Directions	Implications	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Directions Required <input type="checkbox"/> Directions to East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) <input type="checkbox"/> Directions to NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) <input type="checkbox"/> Directions to both ERC and NHSGGC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce <input type="checkbox"/> Equalities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Risk <input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Fairer Scotland Duty	

EAST RENFREWSHIRE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

26 JUNE 2024

Report by Chief Social Work Officer

**FINANCE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR FOSTER CARE, KINSHIP AND ADOPTION
IN RELATION TO SCOTTISH RECOMMENDED ALLOWANCES**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report provides an overview of the Scottish Government implementation of the Scottish Recommended Allowances (SRA) which impacts our foster care, kinship and adoption fees and allowances.

RECOMMENDATION

2. The Integration Joint Board is asked to:
 - Recognise the impact of legislative and policy change for the Health and Social Care Partnership and East Renfrewshire Council.
 - Approve the revised fostering, kinship and adoption fees and allowances which have been reviewed in line with the Scottish Recommended Allowances (SRA).
 - Approve the Continuing Care and Supported Care allowances.

BACKGROUND

3. IJB members will recall approving the uplift and proposal to streamline our fostering fees and allowances, presented to the IJB on 16th August 2023. Subsequently, the Scottish Government implemented the new Scottish Recommended Allowance (SRA) on 29th August 2023, which means we have had to review all earlier decisions in relation to our fees and allowances.
4. The Scottish Government's commitment to keeping the Promise, led to the review and implementation of a national recommended allowance which will benefit care experienced children and young people. The move to a SRA is to create parity across Scotland for all children and young people and recognises the support they receive, no matter where they live.
5. We have shown within East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) a strength of commitment to our looked after children and young people and have continued to review our fees and allowance. We have implemented increases which will make improvements to the lives of East Renfrewshire's children and young people.
6. The Scottish Government is committed to maintaining the 2023-2024 levels of support for the SRA allowances and to reviewing the funding implications for future years from 2024-2025.

7. It should be noted that the SRA covers the allowance only, allowing each local authority and agency to decide their own fee structure.

REPORT

Fostering, Kinship and Adoption

8. In respect of the SRA, the Scottish Government stipulated; *“Where local authorities are already paying above the national minimum allowance, this will continue so that kinship or foster carers currently in receipt of the allowance will not be worse off because of this commitment.”*
9. It is promising to see that we have already taken steps to increase allowances beyond the current SRA (table 1). We are committed to maintaining these higher rates for the 23/24 financial year to ascribe to the ethos of making no carer worse off.
10. As part of our move to streamline fees and allowances we had changed our age ranges to 0-11 and 12+, however we now have to revert to the 4 ages ranges as prescribed by Scottish Government for the SRA.
11. We have also reviewed age ranges for our fostering fee to align with the age ranges introduced by Scottish Government for the SRA, whilst keeping our commitment to the fees as presented on 16th August 2023 paper.
12. These are included in the table below, along with the new recommended allowance which will be effective from April 2023.

New proposed age range	Current			Proposed			Change
	Allowances	Fees	Weekly rate	Allowances	Fees	Weekly rate	Weekly rate
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
0-4 years (was 0-11)	166.74	217.28	384.02	168.31	217.28	385.59	1.57
5-10 years (was 0-11)	166.74	217.28	384.02	195.81	217.28	413.09	29.07
11-15 years (was 12+)	207.60	311.43	519.03	207.60	311.43	519.03	-
16+ years (was 12+)	207.60	311.43	519.03	268.41	311.43	579.84	60.81

Continuing and Supported Care

13. Young people leaving care after their sixteenth birthday who have been looked after in foster, kinship or residential care are eligible for Continuing Care. This means these young people are eligible to stay with their carers up to their 21st birthday.
14. Whilst the Scottish Government are continuing to review the support available to care leavers, including financial support, they have currently stated that the SRA does not apply to young people receiving continuing care, only to those young people aged 16-18 who still are in care.

15. As we remain committed to providing essential support to our young people in continuing care and supported care we have reviewed our previous continuing care and supported care payments and our recommendation would be that continuing care allowance continues to match the 16+ rate of SRA for future payments.
16. The supported care allowance is slightly lower, in recognition of the young person becoming more independent and able to contribute to their own living arrangements. Details are provided in the table below.

	Current			Proposed			Change
	Allowances	Fees	Weekly rate	Allowances	Fees	Weekly rate	Weekly rate
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Continuing Care	207.60	198.51	406.11	268.41	198.51	466.92	60.81
Supported Care	198.51	175.55	374.06	238.41	198.51	436.92	62.86

17. These recommendations would allow continuing care and supported care payments to keep in pace with the fostering SRA. We acknowledge that the Scottish Government may make future proposals for continuing care, and we can review this accordingly.
18. As part of the review of our allowances and fees, we have reviewed our current additional/discretionary payments. To provide additional support to our continuing carers and supported carers we are recommending that we pay one week's birthday payment and one week's Christmas/festival payment equivalent to the young person's weekly allowance rate.
19. Our continuing carers and supported carers have provided feedback that they feel it is important to provide ongoing support for our young people that would continue to give them memories through providing a special birthday and Christmas/festival.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

20. We have had feedback from our carers who are providing continuing and supported care to our young people around any potential for additional financial support.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

Finance

21. The Scottish Government provided additional funding during 2023/24 and this meets the cost of increases effective from 1 April 2023.
22. Through committing to the implementation of SRA we are also recognising that future increases in allowances will be subject to national implementation and oversight. In prior years a local assumption has been made as part of the budget setting process.

Workforce

23. There are no workforce implications however in implementing these recommendations we can continue, as part of our ongoing foster carer recruitment strategy, to compare favourably to external and voluntary providers which will allow us to remain competitive when seeking to recruit and assess new foster carers.

Infrastructure

24. There are no infrastructure implications.

Risk

25. By investing in our carers we are ensuring the retention of them which is an established recruitment strategy and reduces the risk of requiring external placements. External third sector and independent providers is significantly more costly to the Council and HSCP than recruiting and retaining its own carers.

Equalities

26. By implementing the SRA, we are committed to creating parity across Scotland for all care experienced young people. We are continuing to invest in our carers and families and recognise all they offer for our children and young people.

Policy

27. None

Legal

28. None

Fairer Scotland Duty

29. None

DIRECTIONS

30. There are no directions as a result of this report.

CONCLUSIONS

31. The proposals will allow East Renfrewshire to continue to keep our commitment to Scotland's Promise, and our children and young people.

32. Through investing in our own foster carers, we will be best placed to ensure the quality of the care provided to our children and young people is of the standard necessary to improve outcomes and give them the best possible start in life.

33. This proposal strengthens support and scaffolding to all our kinship carers who offer significantly important care to children and young people.

34. These changes will allow us to continue to invest in our children and young people, supporting them to remain in and engage in their local community.

35. Through implementing the SRA and making the commitment that no carer is worse off due to SRA implementation, we will continue to maintain our strong recruitment position. We will remain comparative and competitive across Scotland, which will support our recruitment campaign to increase our own carers ensuring we are less reliant on the need for external fostering/residential costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

36. The Integration Joint Board is asked to:
- Recognise the impact of legislative and policy change for the Health and Social Care Partnership and East Renfrewshire Council.
 - Approve the revised fostering, kinship and adoption fees and allowances which have been reviewed in line with the Scottish Recommended Allowances (SRA).
 - Approve the Continuing Care and Supported Care allowances.

REPORT AUTHOR AND PERSON TO CONTACT

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Chief Officer, IJB: Julie Murray

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[New national allowance for foster and kinship carers - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

[Scottish Recommended Allowance: information for carers and professionals - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

[Executive Summary - Keeping the Promise implementation plan - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

[IJB Item 07 - 16 August 2023.pdf \(eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk\)](http://eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)