



<b>Meeting of East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership</b>	Integration Joint Board
<b>Held on</b>	15 February 2017
<b>Agenda Item</b>	13
<b>Title</b>	East Renfrewshire's Revised Adoption Allowance Scheme
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>In Scotland, every local authority is required to set up an Adoption Allowance Scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that children and adoptive families are sufficiently supported and to enable the right family to be matched with the right child.</p> <p>East Renfrewshire's existing scheme has been in operation since 2007 and was revised in 2013. In order to meet our responsibilities under equalities legislation, we have revised our scheme and procedures.</p>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Kate Rocks Head of Children's Services
<p><b>Action Required</b></p> <p>The IJB is asked to consider the contents of this report and approve the revised Adoption Allowance Scheme.</p>	
<p><b>Implications checklist – check box if applicable and include detail in report</b></p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial                      <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy                      <input type="checkbox"/> Legal                      <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equalities  <input type="checkbox"/> Efficient Government                    <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing                      <input type="checkbox"/> Property                      <input type="checkbox"/> IT             </p>	

## **EAST RENFREWSHIRE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD**

**15 FEBRUARY 2017**

**Report by Chief Officer**

### **ADOPTION ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to revise East Renfrewshire Council's Adoption Allowance Scheme.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

2. The IJB is asked to consider the contents of this report and approve the revised Adoption Allowance Scheme.

#### **BACKGROUND**

3. In Scotland, every local authority is required to set up an Adoption Allowance Scheme. The aim of the scheme is to ensure that children and adoptive families are sufficiently supported and to enable the right family to be matched with the right child. When placing children with an adoptive family, in some circumstances financial support is required to ensure appropriate planning and ongoing support. This proposed scheme will update the council's Adoption Allowance Scheme, previously approved at Committees on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2007, and 21<sup>st</sup> August 2013.
4. The legislative context of adoptive allowances is set in statute. The Adoption Support Services and Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2009 ("the Regulations") made under the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 where Section 71 of the Act requires that an adoption agency which is a local authority must have an Adoption Allowances Scheme.
5. The Regulations have also set out standards in terms of post adoption support placing responsibilities on local authorities to provide post adoption support plans, to ensure children who are adopted receive the best care throughout their lives, reflecting the often continued and complex enduring needs of adopted children and their families.
6. Adoption Allowances are not a universal entitlement but are based on children's current and potential future needs. The allowances are for the purpose of supporting the placement of the adoptive child or the continuation of adoption arrangements, including: adopters from low income households; children with special care needs; the age or ethnic origin of the child; or, allowing siblings, or another child whom the child previously shared a home, to be placed together.
7. East Renfrewshire Council has developed policies and procedures to help support this revised Adoption Allowance Scheme. There are national agreements in terms of post adoption support and in circumstances where a child is placed with adopters, the local authority for the child will provide professional support for the first three years, and thereafter any further assessed support will be met by the receiving local authority. In respect of Adoption Allowances and / or financial support, this will remain the responsibility of the child's placing local authority.

## FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

8. The existing adoption allowance rates are as follows:

Age of Child	Current COSLA Rates	New Revised Rates
0 - 4	£76.16	£125.09
5 - 10	£94.51	£142.49
11 - 15	£117.64	£177.38
16 - 18	£152.33	£177.38

Child Benefit is deducted from these rates.

9. The current COSLA rates have not been reviewed since 2009.
10. Adoption Allowances are currently paid to seven families, and from the period 2013 to 2017, the financial commitment in respect of the Adoption Allowance Scheme had initially increased due to placing more children, who meet the criteria within the Regulations (see table below). Adoption Allowances under the revised scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis through the Adoption and Fostering Panel, taking into account the Regulations, and circumstances of the adoptive families that we support. The shortfall within the existing budget has and will continue to be funded from the residential component of the budget due to the positive variance in shifting the balance of care.

### ACTUAL SPEND

2013 – 2014	£ 31,089.25
2014 – 2015	£ 43,137.29
2015 – 2016	£ 65,988.61
2016 – 2017	£57,718.13

11. New Revised Rates

Projected 2017 - 2018	£69,920.78*
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\*based on the child's current circumstances

## CONSULTATION

12. For the purposes of reviewing and financial modelling, bench marking with neighbouring authorities has taken place and additional information gathered from 32 local authorities in Scotland. In addition we have advised current recipients of an adoption allowance of the proposed changes and sought their views on the new revised rates.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

### Financial

13. Adoption Allowances as detailed below will be met from existing budgets and there are therefore no financial or efficiency implications.

### Policy

14. New practice and procedures will be issued to staff once revision approved.

### Legal

15. None

### Equalities

16. This review addresses our responsibilities under equalities legislation and the need to ensure that we attract prospective adopters from a wide range of backgrounds including those on lower incomes. As the changes acknowledge the additional costs and expenditure associated with caring for a child with complex needs, it is envisaged that the changes will help remove barriers to matching these children with prospective adopters who can best meet children's needs. The Adoption Allowance Scheme will be reviewed annually at the Adoption and Fostering panel.

### Efficient Government

17. None

### Staffing

18. None

### Property

19. None

### IT

20. None

## **CONCLUSIONS**

21. Every local authority is required to set up an Adoption Allowance Scheme. In East Renfrewshire our existing scheme has been revised to enable us to offer more equitable financial provision to adopters, ensuring that the needs of children placed for adoption will be fully met both now and in the future.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

22. The IJB is asked to consider the contents of this report and approve the revised Adoption Allowance Scheme. The IJB is also asked to note the shift in balance of care from residential provision to earlier intervention through the promotion of adoption as a permanent destination for the child.

## **REPORT AUTHOR AND PERSON TO CONTACT**

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17 January 2017

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## **KEY WORDS**

Adoption, Allowances, Permanency, Looked After Children