

## Response to Request for Information

Reference      FOI 002853  
Date            10 October 2018

### ***Fostering Service***

#### **Request:**

I would like to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) in relation to the fostering service provision of your Local Authority:

#### **Foster Carer Payments**

1. When did foster carers last receive an increase to their fostering allowances? (show as month/year)  
[Fostering Allowances were last increased 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2016, we are currently reviewing these.](#)  
  
[Children's allowances were last increased 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018](#)
2. A breakdown of fees currently paid to foster carers, using the format below:  
[Please see table provided on page 4](#)
3. What additional payments are provided to carers, and for the additional payments that are provided, what are the standard costs for each additional payment split by age range? (Examples of additional payments are included below)
  - a. Clothing; - [included in allowances as shown on page 4 question 2](#)
  - b. Holiday; - [2 x child's allowance in year \(claimed by carer\)](#)
  - c. Christmas/festival; - [0-4 = £100 5-10=£110 11-15+£150 16+ = £180](#)
  - d. Birthday; - [As Christmas/Festival dependant on age](#)
  - e. Equipment/furniture - [£500 setting up allowance \(made only once\)](#)
4. Who is responsible (local authority or carers) for ensuring that children and young people (CYP) are receiving pocket money and savings?  
[This is a joint responsibility shared between the local authority and foster carers.](#)
  - a. What is the weekly pocket money amount provided to children and young people

0 – 4	nil
5 – 10	£4
11 – 15	£7
16+	£10

- b. What is the weekly savings amount provided to children and young people
- |         |     |
|---------|-----|
| 0 – 4   | £5  |
| 5 – 10  | £6  |
| 11 – 15 | £8  |
| 16+     | £13 |

5. Are carers entitled to paid respite? If yes, how many days?  
Carers are not entitled to paid respite however as requested all efforts are made to facilitate respite.

### **Framework Providers & Fees**

6. In relation to any Frameworks you currently operate with Independent Fostering Agency Providers, please provide the following information (including Provider name) about the number of CYP placed with Independent Fostering Provider Foster Carers, the average weekly fee paid for these placements, per age bracket and any applicable discounts agreed with said Provider. Please use the format below:
7. As per question 6, please provide the same information using the format below; however, this time in relation to Non-Framework Providers i.e. where the Local Authority (LA) has placed with Independent Fostering Agency Providers using a Spot Purchase mechanism because the Provider is not on a Framework with the LA.

With reference to questions 6 and 7 above, your request for information has now been considered and the City of Wolverhampton Council is not obliged to supply the information you requested for the reasons set out below.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires City of Wolverhampton Council, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you, the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states the fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies:

In relation to your particular request, the following exemption applies:

### **Section 12 - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit**

We can confirm that the Council holds information falling within the description specified in your request. However, Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows a public authority to refuse a request if the cost of providing the information to the applicant would exceed the 'appropriate limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information.

The Regulations provide that the appropriate limit to be applied to requests received by local authorities is £450 (equivalent to 18 hours of work). In estimating the cost of complying with a request for information, an authority can only take into account any reasonable costs incurred in:

- (a) *Determining whether it holds the information,*
  - (b) *Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information,*
  - (c) *Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information,*
- and
- (d) *Extracting the information from a document containing it.*

*For the purposes of the estimate the costs of performing these activities should be estimated at a rate of £25 per hour.*

The information appertaining to your request is not easily accessible and as such this information is not held as a distinct set able to be retrieved or reported on. To get the information would require a full scale look into all individual records which would take approximately two weeks. This would be a manual exercise and as such we believe that the aggregated time it would take to collate the information would be in excess of 18 hours (equivalent to a notional cost of £450).

Excess cost removes the City of Wolverhampton Council's obligation under the Freedom of Information, however under Section 16 – (the duty to provide advice and assistance, the Council may be able to provide answers to the request, should you wish to submit a refined request.

Please note that in terms of fostering framework we would generally refer queries to the regional lead which is Birmingham Children's Trust.

### **Caseloads**

8. What is the average No of LAC cases your social workers are expected to hold at any one time.

There is no expected caseload for social workers in the children and young people in care service . This will be dependent upon experience of the social worker and complexity of the cases.

