

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
Date	15 October 2019
Present	Councillor Cuthbertson

6. Declarations of Interest

The Executive Member confirmed that he had no personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, nor any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, to declare in the business on the agenda.

7. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 18 June 2019 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

8. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme. Prof. Paul Kind spoke on Agenda Item 4 (Review of Foster Carers Uplift).

Prof. Paul Kind raised 30 day consultation period contained in the report for the 19 March 2019 Decision Session - Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education. He stated that he did not believe this took place. He noted that the Independent Review of Foster Care Uplifts did not address the monetary value of foster carer's professional work, and asked the Executive Member to commit to a review in 12 months of both the Placement Review and the Independent Review of Foster Care Uplifts.

9. Review of Foster Carers Uplift

The Executive Member considered a report outlining the independent review into the decision to remove the annual City of York foster carer uplift. Officers recommended that the recommendations in the report be accepted in full.

In response to the Executive Member and matters raised under Public Participation the officers confirmed that:

- The report was jointly recommended by City of York Council and YAFCA and both parties agreed the specifications of the review;
- The review had extensive consultations with foster carers from both inside and outside of YAFCA and that the Assistant Director Children's Specialist Services and the Chair of YAFCA have held several positive conversations on moving forward;
- Recommendation iii in the report aims to both strengthen recruitment of foster carers, and address the fact that foster carers on levels one and two are currently lowly funded compared to other carers by implementing the uplift for 2019/20 for levels one and two foster carers. Officers noted that City of York Council currently has very generous rates for higher level carers;
- At the Show Me I Care event held by the Care Leaves Council and the Children in Care Council, it was made clear that they are very keen on the non-monetary awards for foster carers being the primary motive for becoming a foster carer.

The 19 March 2019 Decision Session - Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education meeting stated that foster carers had been clearly communicated about the changes regarding the fees. Recognising this had not been clearly communicated the Executive Member agreed to alter this in the minutes from the Decision Session.

The Executive Member recognised the disparity between fees for levels one and two with foster carers on higher levels, and noted that the recommendation of the uplift for levels one and two is a positive step to addressing the disparity. He outlined that the question of a monetary value for foster carers should be considered as part of any consultation on future decisions because a foster carer is not a paid employment.

Officers highlighted that measuring success would be identified through:

- Placement stability, whether children are happy in their homes;
- The recruitment and retention of foster carers. There is a large amount of national research that covers the wide range of reasons people become and remain a foster carer that can be used in recruitment and retention;
- How groups and communities that do not see themselves as foster carers are encouraged to become foster carers. The new Council administration has put resources in place for digital marketing to attract people currently unrepresented in the foster carer community to join it, focusing marketing around consultation with young people about how they wish to advertise for foster carers;
- The support provided to foster carers and young people as part of building strong relationships with social workers and foster carer networks. Identifying what support packages should look like through consultation.

The Executive Member made observation of mistakes in the figures show on page 8 of the agenda. Level two difference per carer per annum is £176.80 not £174.64, and the difference for

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level one carer per annum is £66.56 not £66.35, this means that the total difference for level one carers per annum is £1997.00

not

£1991.00.

Resolved: (i) That Option 1 be approved and the recommendations of the independent review be adopted in full, as follows:

- a. The council to set out a clear framework for consultation and communication on future decisions on foster carer uplifts, fees and allowances.
- b. The council and York Area Foster Carer Association (YAFCA) to agree a communications strategy to include future developments planned by the council, future consultations and clear channels for YAFCA to raise concerns.

- c. The council to consider implementing the uplift for 2019/20 for those foster carers on level one and two, to strengthen the recruitment strategy.
- d. The council, in partnership with YAFCA, to host an annual conference for foster carers.
- e. YAFCA to consider how as an organisation it can reach all foster carers to offer support and positive working relationships with the council.
- f. The council to consider non-monetary awards for long standing foster carers.

(ii) That any alternative models of reimbursement be dealt with under the consultation framework referred to in point a. above and that an evaluation of the review and the consultation framework, with quantifiable outcomes to consider.

Reason: To ensure that independent best practice is followed.

Cllr I Cuthbertson, Executive Member
[The meeting started at 4.09 pm and finished at 4.32 pm].