

LEAD MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

MINUTES of a meeting of the Lead Member for Children and Families held in CC2 at County Hall, Lewes on 12 October 2015.

Councillors Field, Forward, St Pierre and Whetstone spoke on item 3 (see minute 2).

1 REPORTS

1.1 A copy of the reports referred to below are contained in the minute book.

2 ONGOING FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO FOSTER CARERS WHO APPLY FOR A SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDER OR AN ADOPTION ORDER

2.1 The Lead Member for Children and Families considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which sought approval to make changes to the financial support for foster carers who apply for a Special Guardianship Order or for an Adoption Order.

2.2 RESOLVED to approve changes to the financial support to foster carers who apply for a Special Guardianship Order or for an Adoption Order, as set out below:

- (i) For a foster carer who is becoming a Special Guardian for a child that was previously fostered, for the first two years post order their ongoing payment (including their maintenance allowance and fee) will remain the same. At the end of the second year, a taper will be introduced for the fee element, 60% for the first 6 months and 55% for the remaining 6 months, so that by the end of the third year only the maintenance element will be payable until the child reaches 18 years old
- (ii) Any ongoing additional payments (i.e. the fee element) to foster carers after 3 years will be made if the Local Authority considers the case to be exceptional and payment would need to be agreed by the Assistant Director of Children's Services.
- (iii) After 3 years, a foster carer who has adopted a child that was previously fostered must be assessed as qualifying for an Adoption Allowance in line with ESCC's policies in order for payment to continue. Allowances are not intended to apply to young single children or to babies with no particular special needs for whom suitable adoptive parents are more readily available. It is likely to be applied to older children, to sibling groups and to children with special needs.
- (iv) There will be protection of current payments for those existing former foster carers who are already in receipt of ongoing allowances as part of their initial support plans, under the "No Detriment" principle for both SGO's or Adoption Orders. ESCC will continue to honour these existing agreements made in good faith.

Reasons

2.3 Greater financial control is necessary with reduced resources within East Sussex County Council. The changes to the financial support to foster carers who apply for a Special Guardianship Order or for an Adoption Order will enable savings to be made.

(The meeting ended at 10.43am)