

REPORT OF THE  
**Executive Lead Member for Children's Services**  
PART II

**266. FEES AND ALLOWANCES IN RESPECT OF CHILDREN SUPPORTED IN ADOPTION, FAMILY AND FRIENDS CARE ARRANGEMENTS, FOSTER CARE AND FAMILY LINK FOR 2012/13**

1. On 23 March 2012, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approved an annual increase in the County Council's fees and allowances payable in respect of children who cannot be cared for by their parents and who need to be cared for away from home, and in respect of disabled children who are supported to remain at home, with regular respite care provided by others.

2. In response to the publication of new statutory guidance on family and friends care for Local Authorities in April 2011, the Children's Services department has produced a policy document, which relates to children living away from home with a close relative, extended family members or family friends. This recognises that relatives who care for children appropriately require both advice and support from the department. The principle underpinning this policy is that wherever possible, children should be helped to remain in their own homes with their own parents, and where this is not possible, they should be cared for in their extended families or with adults with whom they are familiar. Wherever possible families should be supported to care for children within their family and friends network without the need for the child to enter the care system.

3. The Children's Services department recognises the importance of developing a range of different family placements for children, each being eligible for financial support to ensure that a child is not prevented from being placed under the appropriate legal framework with a family who can best meet their needs, due solely to financial barriers.

4. Fees and allowances payable to carers have been carefully constructed to ensure that children are not disadvantaged in achieving the best placement, because of any financial inequalities. The primary consideration can, therefore, be the best legal arrangement with the carer who can offer security and good outcomes for the child. The allowances also recognise the additional requirements of foster carers caring for children in public care, and the different demands on those caring for children who are not in care. The allowance levels proposed for 2012/13 match Fostering Network Recommended Rates for fostering allowances, which exceed National Minimum Fostering Rates. In addition, family placements need to be available for children who are in care, but also for children who are 'on the edge' of the care system. This includes children or young people who could be prevented from coming into care, or who could be supported in leaving care, by way of agreement or by a legal order.

5. The range of placement types covers:

- Fostering Allowances
- Adoption Allowances
- Residence Order Allowances

- Informal Family and Friends Care Arrangements and private fostering
- Special Guardianship
- Family Link Allowances
- Skills Fees.

6. The annual increase in the County Council's fees and allowances in respect of children living away from home will enable more children to live in family placements by ensuring that a range and choice of placements is available, so that each child can be carefully matched to a family setting which meets their needs. With a stable family placement, children are more likely to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing as adults.

7. Further details can be found at [www.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings.htm](http://www.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings.htm) by typing in the relevant reference number:

- Fees and Allowances in Respect of Children Supported in Adoption, Family and Friends Care arrangements, Foster Care and Family Link for 2012/13 (search item reference 3670).

**COUNCILLOR ROY PERRY**  
**Executive Lead Member for Children's Services**