

Notice of:	CABINET SECRETARY (RESILIENT COMMUNITIES)
Decision Number:	PH63/2018
Relevant Officer:	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Graham Cain, Cabinet Secretary (Resilient Communities)
Date of Decision:	21 September 2018

CHARGING POLICY FOR CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL AND FOSTERING SERVICES

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the introduction of a charging policy Section 20 accommodation of children and young people in fostering or residential care.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To approve the introduction of the charging policy for children's residential and fostering services as outlined in Appendix A with effect from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 This Policy will enable the Council to ensuring the service's sustainability and fairness by charging those who can contribute. Blackpool Children's Services does not presently have a charging policy in respect to Section 20 accommodation of children and young people in fostering or residential care.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

The other alternative option is not to request a parent to contribute to their child's care and for the Council to absorb the full cost.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council priority is: "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience".

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Council is proposing the introduction of a charging policy (Sharing the costs charging policy for children looked after pursuant to s.20 children act 1989 in residential / foster placements) in respect to a contribution by parents to the cost of residential or fostering services where parents request that their child be looked after by the Council pursuant to s.20 Children Act 1989.

As outlined above this policy is being introduced, to ensure the service's sustainability and fairness by charging those who can contribute.

5.2 This policy complies with the Children Act 1989 and the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need; The Children Act 1989 allows local authorities to charge for services provided under Section, 20 of the Act and thereby to recover from a parent such charge for the service as they consider reasonable.

5.3 In order for the policy not to be detrimental to parents on low income there are exemptions proposed within the policy and contributions are based on a financial assessment of the parents income.

5.4 The principles underlying this policy are that the policy:

- Operates in partnership with parent(s) to reflect the sharing of responsibility between parents and the local authority and ensure best outcomes for each child;
- Supports the overall objectives of the Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount and promotes parental responsibility;
- Seeks to be reasonable and fair to all service users;
- Aims to ensure families are claiming/receiving all the benefits to which they are entitled.

5.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

5.6 List of Appendices:

Appendix A: Sharing the costs charging policy for children looked after pursuant to s.20 children act 1989 in residential / foster placements

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 The Council's Legal team has been consulted on the proposed charging policy and made appropriate amendments to ensure compliance with the Children Act 1989.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 There are no equality issues in relation to this policy as it does not discriminate against any particular group. The Policy is based on a financial assessment and there are exemptions in place to address those unable to contribute due to low income.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 The Policy will enable contributions to be made by parents to sharing the cost of their child's care where it is appropriate to do so.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 The risk to the Council of not approving this policy is the Council will continue to absorb the full cost of care for children/young people accommodated under Sec 20 of The Children Act 1989 and will not reflect the responsibility between parents and Blackpool Council in ensuring best outcomes are achieved for the child.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 Please see principle outlined above.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 No consultation undertaken.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None

14.0 Key decision information:

14.1 Is this a key decision? No

14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

15.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed:

Date approved:

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

17.1 None.

18.0 Executive decision:

18.1 The Cabinet Secretary agreed the recommendation as outlined above namely:

To approve the introduction of the charging policy for children's residential and fostering services as outlined in Appendix A with effect from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019.

18.2 Date of Decision:

21 September 2018

19.0 Reason(s) for decision:

This Policy will enable the Council to ensuring the service's sustainability and fairness by charging those who can contribute. Blackpool Children's Services does not presently have a charging policy in respect to Section 20 accommodation of children and young people in fostering or residential care.

19.1 Date Decision published:

21 September 2018

20.0 Executive Members in attendance:

20.1

21.0 Call-in:

21.1

22.0 Notes:

22.1