

DECISION NOTICE

Notice is given that the following decision has been taken under the Provisions set out in the Council's Constitution

Decision maker: Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Date: 18 July 2017

Decision in the matter of: Cared for Children Charging Policy

Decision:

1. That approval be given to the adoption of the policy, shown as Appendix 1 of the report, from 1 August 2017 for all new entrants to care subject to Section 20 of the Children Act where care proceedings are not the agreed care plan.
2. That a review of the effectiveness of the policy be carried out in one year's time.

Background: The legal power to claim costs from parents is contained in Section 29 and Section 2 of the Children Act 1989. This policy aims to promote children remaining within their families and to deter families from abdicating their parental responsibilities, and to reduce the numbers of cared for children where parents are able to care for their own children.

Careful management and oversight will however be needed to ensure the charging policy does not become a barrier to children coming into care where there is a need to safeguard their welfare. The Head of Service for Cared for Children, together with the management team, will provide oversight via the Permanence Tracking Panel which will review the appropriateness of the charging policy to individual children as they enter care and the Head of Service has the discretion to set aside a charge if required.

The policy reflects the sharing of responsibility between parents and the local authority to ensure best outcomes for children; it supports the objectives of the Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount and promotes social responsibility; it should not result in parents being charged more than they can reasonably be expected to pay; it should not result in parents refusing to agree to voluntary accommodation arrangements if to do so would place a child at risk of continued harm; it assesses all families ability to contribute irrespective of income or employment status; and uses the income generated to support current services.

Background Documents:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

Approved:

Signed
Councillor George Hayes (Cabinet Member for Children and Families)

Date:

18 July 2017

Advising Officer:

Signed
Nigel Moorhouse (Director of Children's Social Care)