

Fostering Devon is reviewing the fees it pays foster carers to ensure fairness and consistency. For example at the moment there are three different fostering schemes for carers who look after children and young people with complex and challenging needs:

- Mainstream Fostering
- Family Care Workers Scheme (former scheme)
- Devon Young People's Accommodation Scheme (DYPAS)

Consequently, foster carers on different schemes may have similar placements yet receive different fees.

We have set up a project team, to include foster carers, to work closely with foster carers across Devon to develop a new fee structure that is fair and equitable.

This is not a cost saving exercise and there is no intention to reduce the size of the budget; we need to develop a fee structure that is fair and consistent for all foster carers within the existing budget.

The review process started earlier in the year with some engagement events held across the county. These events highlighted the inconsistency in the current arrangements regarding the fees. They were followed by a workshop at the end of October when we invited a cross section of foster carers and social workers to meet with the project team.

The aim of the workshop was to ask the group what they considered the key principles of a fair foster care fee structure to be. The group was asked to list their key principles and then to rank them in order of priority.

1. Complexity of child's needs
2. Equitable and fair
3. Rewards and recognition
4. Clear core allowances
5. DCC Support
6. Fair assessment process
7. Simplified
8. Competitive with IFA's
9. Clear expectations
10. Flexibility
11. Transparent

With the agreed set of principles in mind, the group developed different fee model options, which we want to share with all our foster carers; we really want to hear what you think.

We are therefore holding more engagement events across Devon in the New Year which will give you the opportunity to have your say on the different fee models. Full details of these events will be published in this newsletter and on the Fostering Devon website in the New Year.

We hope that these planned engagement events will answer all your questions about this review and the proposed fee model options. If you have any additional questions or concerns or if you are unable to attend the events in person please email: [fallowances@devon.gov.uk](mailto:fallowances@devon.gov.uk) . All emails will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Foster carer feedback from October workshop:

*“The breakout groups enabled everyone to voice their opinions and shape individual models”*

*“I thought it was very positive and enjoyed the participation in it. More importantly I feel we all had a say with our opinions”*

*“I thoroughly enjoyed the previous workshop, it was good to feel like we were part of the team and definitely felt like all views were listed to, whilst knowing that not everyone can have everything that they want (since we don't live in an ideal world!)”*

