Item No: 7

Meeting Date: **Wednesday 29th November 2023**

Glasgow City Integration Joint Board

Report By: **Mike Burns, Assistant Chief Officer, Children and Families**

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Scottish Recommended Allowances for Kinship and Fostering Services

Purpose of Report:	To advise the IJB of the Scottish Recommended Allowances for kinship and fostering services agreed by COSLA and the Scottish Government and to seek agreement to implement the payment of the proposed allowances backdated to 1st April 2023.

Background/Engagement:	There have been discussions nationally for several years to agree a consistent Scottish Recommended Allowance (SRA) for kinship and fostering services. This was discussed previously in June 2023 in the Foster Care Update report. Foster Carers and Kinship Carers have been involved in a variety of discussions in relations to supports available to them and have been kept updated in terms to the proposed SRA. This development is aligned to the recommendations contained within the Independent Care Review and delivery of the Promise.

Governance Route:	The matters contained within this paper have been previously considered by the following group(s) as part of its development. HSCP Senior Management Team ☐ Council Corporate Management Team ☐ Health Board Corporate Management Team ☐ Council Committee ☐ Update requested by IJB ☒ Other ☒

	Children's Core Leadership Team Not Applicable ☐

Recommendations:	The Integration Joint Board is asked to: a) Note the proposed Scottish Recommended Allowances; and b) Approve the proposed Scottish Recommended Allowances for kinship and foster carers and implementation of the new rates by Glasgow City Council, backdated to 1st April 2023; and c) Instruct the council to uplift the rates paid to kinship and foster carers as outlined within this report.

Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:

Foster Carers and kinship carers are integral to the delivery of high-quality care for children in Glasgow who cannot live at home with their own families. These carers are critical to the delivery of the children's transformation programme to sustain children as close to Glasgow as possible and to maintain children and young people's links to their schools and communities.

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome(s):	Foster Carers and Kinship Carers contribute to some of the key national outcomes in terms of improving outcomes for children and young people. Improving support for carers ensures that children and young people who use health and social care services have positive experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected. Such outcomes are aligned to the HSCP's transformation agenda and the desire to shift the balance of care, and secure better outcomes for all children and young people living in the City.

Personnel:	None

Carers:	Carers are key partners and key stakeholders to the effective delivery of services and meeting good permanence outcomes for care experienced children and young people.

Provider Organisations:	Providers of fostering services commissioned by GCC may consider the impact of a SRA on these services and consequently additional cost could be incurred. Glasgow has 177 children in young people in such placements.

Equalities:	An EQIA is not deemed necessary. The wider Children's Transformation Programme, of which the work detailed in this report is a part, has been subject to a recent and updated EQIA.

Fairer Scotland Compliance:	The Children's Transformation Programme actively seeks to reduce inequalities and to support children, young people, and carers to improve their quality of life and reduce the impact of health and social inequalities. Sustainable and stable placements for children and young people not only promotes the opportunity for better outcomes but significantly reduces the cost of additional placements and costs.

Financial:	The adoption of the Scottish recommended allowance has financial implications, these are detailed in the report. Additional funding of £2.365m has been received from the Scottish Government for this purpose and is intended to cover the difference between current rates paid by Glasgow and the SRA.

Legal:	Normal legal processes and procedures for Glasgow City Council will be followed to support children, young people, and carers in accordance with feedback about the service and continuous improvement of the service

Economic Impact:	Providing children and young people with high quality care makes best use of resources, and helps to ensure positive long-term outcomes, thereby reducing future need for further specialist and expensive supports, including Adult Services. Additional financial support mitigates the impact of the cost of living and has a positive economic impact for children and young people.

Sustainability:	Implementation of the SRA ensures carers in Glasgow can meet the needs to the children and young people they support. In supporting carers, the Children's transformation programme can continue to be delivered effectively.

Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:	None

Risk Implications:	There are risks associated with the implementation in that if there were to be a significant increase in children and young people entering kinship and foster placements these could become unaffordable. This is mitigated in terms of the transformation programme. There is no evidence to suggest that this will be the case. Equally, not implementing would disadvantage Glasgow's carers, children, and young people. There is a risk that foster carers would leave causing concerns about increased placement costs.

	The associated increase in the allowance to Kinship Carers also strengthens the opportunity for placement stability and the opportunity for children and young people to remain within their extended families and also often within their local school and local community.

Implications for Glasgow City Council:	As indicated the implications of implementing the SRA will have consequences in terms of sustaining payments already made above the recommended allowances and likewise the implications across the kinship care arrangements. Not implementing the SRA could cause reputational damage.

Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde:	N/A.

Direction Required to Council, Health Board or Both – Please refer to guidance.	
Direction to: Please tick appropriate box	
1. No Direction Required	☐
2. Glasgow City Council	☒
3. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	☐
4. Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	☐

1. Purpose

1.1. To advise the IJB of the Scottish Recommended Allowances (SRA) for kinship care and foster care services agreed by COSLA and the Scottish Government and to seek agreement to implement the payment of the proposed allowances backdated to 1st April 2023.

2. Background

2.1. In March 2022 the IJB agreed to increase the kinship and foster care allowances for the 40% of children in Glasgow's foster and kinship placements where they were believed, at that time, to be below the anticipated SRA.

2.2. This increased allowances for kinship and foster carers with children 0-4 years from £137.18 to £146 per week and 5-10 years from £156.30 per week to £170 per week.

2.3. It was agreed the remaining 60% who were thought to be around or in line with the proposed national allowance would be sustained at that level until the outcome of the national review was known. That is, allowances for 11-15 years would remain at £194.54 and for those 16+ would remain at £236.60.

2.4. In Glasgow, an additional 4 weeks of allowances are made over the course of the year to cover birthdays, winter festivals and holidays. It is proposed that this will continue to ensure that no families are in detriment if the SRA is adopted.

2.5. Mileage is also paid to foster cares for anything out with their local area. It is proposed that this remains in place.

2.6. In November 2022 the IJB also agreed to increase the fee to foster carers from £150 to £165.

2.7. Following discussions between the Scottish Government and COSLA over several years it has now been agreed that the Scottish Government will provide an additional £16 million of revenue to introduce a new SRA for foster and kinship carers across Scotland to be backdated to 1 April 2023. This was agreed by COSLA Leaders on 25 August 2023, following the recommendation of the Settlement and Distribution Group (SDG) on 16 August. The Scottish recommended rates are based on independent analysis carried out by Fraser of Allander Institute in 2018 on the cost of supporting a child.

2.8. The SRA is a key commitment in the Programme for Government and the Scottish Government's Promise Implementation Plan, published in March 2022. It aligns with the Scottish Government and COSLA's commitment to #KeepThePromise, and a shared priority of tackling child poverty and supporting the most vulnerable in society, especially given the ongoing cost of living crisis. Specifically, the SRA is intended to help ensure that children in foster and kinship care get the support they need to thrive and ensure there is parity in the financial support provided to kinship and foster carers, regardless of where they live in Scotland.

2.9. The SRA provides a recommended allowance that all local authorities are expected to pay as a minimum. Where local authorities are already paying above the SRA, it is expected that this will continue so that kinship or foster carers currently in receipt of the allowance will not be worse off because of this commitment.

2.10. The allowances are intended to cover the following –

- Food, toiletries, clothes, wear and tear
- Hobbies and activities
- Bedding, furniture
- Pocket money/ toys
- Insurance and utility bill increases
- Daily access to a computer and the internet for homework/course work/ mobile phone
- Transport costs for the child (for the purpose of attending review meetings, children's hearings, contact, travel to school, college or other educational facility)
- Holiday costs to cover school holiday activities and family trips
- Birthday/ Christmas or other cultural or religious events.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 The following table outlines the difference between current Glasgow allowances and the SRA.

	0-4	5-10	5-15	16+
Glasgow (Current	£146	£170	£194.54	£236.60
Scotland (recommended)	£168.31	£195.81	£195.81	£268.41

3.2 Glasgow currently has 474 children and young people in our provided foster placements and 1,335 in kinship care placements.

3.3 The Glasgow City allocation is £2.365m, sufficient to cover the uplift in rates from 2021-22. It should be noted however, that the Glasgow City IJB previously chose to implement an increase to rates in 2021-22 at a cost to the IJB of £0.500m. Due to the early adoption of this increase, this additional funding will positively contribute, but it will not compensate for this increase, nor the previous investment made by the city over several years. Nevertheless, this development represents a positive step forward both nationally, but critically for Carers and for the children and young people they care for. This additional funding will supplement the established allowances in Glasgow and the additional funding will enable the HSCP to enhance the current allowances and strengthen the arrangements for both fostering and kinship.

3.4 The recent Fostering inspection also provided an updated and helpful insight into the challenges and this new proposal will align to the Service's desire to strengthen improvements around the actions outlined in the Foster Care Action Plan (Appendix 1).

3.5 The Champions' Board for Care Experienced Children and Young People will also provide a helpful platform to not only maintain the engagement of Foster and Kinship Carers around the ongoing monitoring and implications of the new SRA, but provide an opportunity for dialogue with carers around the financial arrangements and sustainability around the costs involved in raising children and young people now and in the future. The reconstituted Champions' Board is in the process of arranging its first meeting before the end of the year and this will take place on 6th December 2023.

4. Recommendations

4.1. The Integration Joint Board is asked to:

a) Note the proposed Scottish Recommended Allowances;
b) Approve the proposed Scottish Recommended Allowances for kinship and foster carers and implementation of the new rates by Glasgow City Council, backdated to 1st April 2023
c) Instruct the council to uplift the rates paid to kinship and foster carers as outlined within this report.

Direction from the Glasgow City Integration Joint Board

1	**Reference number**	291123-7
2	**Report Title**	Scottish Recommended Allowances for Kinship and Fostering Services
3	**Date direction issued by Integration Joint Board**	29 November 2023
4	**Date from which direction takes effect**	29 November 2023
5	**Direction to:**	Glasgow City Council only
6	**Does this direction supersede, revise or revoke a previous direction – if yes, include the reference number(s)**	No
7	**Functions covered by direction**	Children's Services-Fostering and Kinship Care Allowances
8	**Full text of direction**	Glasgow City Council is Directed to implement the payment of the proposed Scottish Recommended Allowances for kinship and foster carers, backdated to 1st April 2023 and including the retention of the additional 4 weeks of allowances made over the course of the year as outlined in 2.4 of the report.
9	**Budget allocated by Integration Joint Board to carry out direction**	The budget allocation for implementation of the new rates is Glasgow City's allocation of £2.365m from the Scottish Government.
10	**Performance monitoring arrangements**	In line with the agreed Performance Management Framework of the Glasgow City Integration Joint Board and the Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership.
11	**Date direction will be reviewed**	September 2024

APPENDIX 1

FOSTER CARE SERVICES – ACTION PLAN

AREA FOR CONSIDERATION / DEVELOPMENT	ACTION REQUIRED	RESPONSIBLE PERSON (S)	TIMESCALE	UPDATE AS OF NOVEMBER 2023
Communication and consultation with foster carers	1. Forum for foster carers to feedback views to be established and held at regular intervals, like the recent summit. 2. All Foster Carers to be afforded the opportunity to submit their views on what they need to support them to care for Glasgow's children. 3. Foster Care representation to be sought for the Children's Champions' Board and The Promise Board for Glasgow.	Cathy Coll, Service Manager Joanne Bradley, Service Manager Susan Orr, Head of Service	June 2023	In person Carer Support groups have been re-established. As uptake has been lower than expected we are now developing daytime and online support groups. Feedback from these sessions is being shared with Service Managers to inform service development and support to carers. Representation on the Children's Champion's Board is still to be confirmed.
Support to foster carers	1. A review of support to carers to be undertaken. 2. Support Groups to be re-established face to face to allow carers to meet with each other to benefit from peer interaction.	Cathy Coll, Service Manager Joanne Bradley, Service Manager Susan Orr, Head of Service	October 2023	In person Carer Support groups have been re-established and further expansion is planned. Iniitial discussions have been held about use of the Nuture Framework in relation to a specific young person. Further meetings are scheduled to consider broader use within Families for Children (FFC).

AREA FOR CONSIDERATION / DEVELOPMENT	ACTION REQUIRED	RESPONSIBLE PERSON (S)	TIMESCALE	UPDATE AS OF NOVEMBER 2023
Support to foster carers *(continued)*	3. A review of support to carers to be undertaken. 4. Support Groups to be re-established face to face to allow carers to meet with each other to benefit from peer interaction. 5. The Nurture Framework, the model of care for Glasgow, to be introduced and carers to be invited to participate in learning opportunities in relation to this. 6. The opportunity to access short breaks to be reviewed in line with the aspirations of 'The Promise,' including recruitment and retention of short break carers. 7. Support available to foster carers to enhance their health and wellbeing to be reviewed and updated. 8. Guidance on 'good transitions' to be developed that benefits both carers and children.	Cathy Coll, Service Manager Joanne Bradley, Service Manager Susan Orr, Head of Service	October 2023	FFC have an active carer recruitment campaign – "Dear Diary" - for all types of foster care including short breaks. At the annual FFC Safeguarding Day on 29th November 2023, the new placement support meeting model and carer supervision guidance will be launched. This has a refreshed focus on carer support. Polly Cowan, (AFKA Scotland) led a developmental session with all FFC staff, focussing on her research into good practice in transitions. FFC Learning & Development team are currently developing a training input for carers and adopters around this area with a view to being launched in Spring 2024. An online learning platform, similar to GOLD, is being developed to allow carers to access a suite of training at their convenience.

AREA FOR CONSIDERATION / DEVELOPMENT	ACTION REQUIRED	RESPONSIBLE PERSON (S)	TIMESCALE	UPDATE AS OF NOVEMBER 2023
Support for Children and Young People	1. Supports available to children and young people in foster care to be explored, detailed and shared with carers. 2. Practice guidance to be developed along with TaSS to improve the experience of both children and foster carers in relation to transport provision for family time/ school and nursery. 3. A renewed focus on care planning and permanence for children in foster care to be established.	Cathy Coll, Service Manager Joanne Bradley, Service Manager Susan Orr, Head of Service	October 2023	ASM/IRO development session is planned for 21st November 2023 with a renewed focus on permanence practice across all of Children's Services. Workstreams are currently looking at streamlining paperwork/ tracking of children's care plans / formal training re planning for a child's future. For the last 9 months we have been trialing a new placement support template which we have been using outwith other core meetings to consider carer and young people's support needs. Placement support is a focus of our annual Safeguarding Day on 29th November 2023.
Financial Considerations	1. Further discussions to take place with Scottish Government, COSLA and Social Work Scotland regarding the proposed national allowance for foster carers in Scotland.	Susan Orr, Head of Service Mike Burns, ACO, Children's Services	April 2023	In August 2023, the Scottish Government announced a new Scottish Recommended Allowance (SRA) for children and young people in kinship and foster care.

AREA FOR CONSIDERATION / DEVELOPMENT	ACTION REQUIRED	RESPONSIBLE PERSON (S)	TIMESCALE	UPDATE AS OF NOVEMBER 2023
Financial Considerations *(continued)*	2. Consideration of increasing allowances for birthdays and holidays to be explored.	Susan Orr, Head of Service Mike Burns, ACO, Children's Services	April 2023	SG funding was confirmed in October 2023. Reports will be presented to the IJB and the Council's City Administration Committee on 29th and 30th November respectively. Subject to their approval, the SRA will be implemented and backdated to 1st April 2023. Consideration of increasing allowances for birthdays and holidays is still to be scoped out.