

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 16 NOVEMBER 2021

UPLIFT OF ALLOWANCES FOR SUPPORTED LODGINGS PROVIDERS

REPORT BY KATHRYN LINDSAY DIRECTOR – CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND JUSTICE

ABSTRACT

Angus Council has a Supported Lodgings Scheme. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 outlines the need for appropriate accommodation for young people over 16 years of age to support them to prepare for independent living. This report sets out proposals to increase the weekly fee paid to approved Supported Lodgings Providers.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note the content of this report.
- (ii) Approve a fee rate of £250 per week payable to Supported Lodgings Providers from 1 December 2021.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

This report contributes to outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan 2017-2030 and the Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families:

- Children are given the best start in life.
- Physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing is improved.
- There are more opportunities for people to achieve success.
- Our children and young people who experience inequalities and disadvantage will achieve health, wellbeing and educational outcomes comparable with all other children and young people.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Angus Council's Supported Lodgings Scheme is a 'stepping stone' for some care leavers aged between 16-21 who are moving on from statutory care arrangements. Supported Lodgings Providers (SLPs) offer a bedroom and use of communal rooms within a supportive home environment. In line with regulated carers, SLP's are assessed and approved by Angus Council. As an adult resource, the focus of the placement is on providing a supported living environment in which the young person can grow towards independent living, for example, young people will be expected to learn to cook, clean, and budget which includes paying a weekly 'board' fee.

3.2 Angus Council currently have three SLPs providing potential placements for up to four care leavers. This is a bespoke resource available to meet the needs of young people. Over the past three years, there has been consistent placement availability and void periods. This is due to matching considerations and the other pathway plan options available for care leavers. It remains a hugely important resource to have available for the critical few young people for whom this is the most suitable living arrangement.

3.3 Building on the model available for our care experienced young people, and in light of evidence of successful approaches in other local authorities, we plan to launch a recruitment drive shortly focusing on recruiting SLPs as humanitarian carers for our Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking children as part of the National Transfer Scheme (see Report 303/21).

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The SLP is paid an agreed fee, as agreed by Angus Council, of £170 per week. This fee is substantially less than we currently pay foster carers who offer continuing care placements (for e.g., an allowance for a 16-18 year old alone is £266 per week and the fee for a level two carer

is approximately £298 for one young person). Whilst it is recognised that the role and the expectations of foster carers is different, the differential is not considered proportionate.

- 4.2 The SLP is expected to provide a warm and comfortable living environment, basic clothing, toiletries, and food i.e., breakfast, lunch and an evening meal from the fee given. Feedback from SLPs is that the current fee does not consistently cover all costs and offer a reasonable element of fee in recognition of their personal time, support, and commitment to young people.
- 4.3 Benchmarking with other local authorities who run similar schemes, highlighted that our current fee rate is substantially lower. For example, South Lanarkshire pay £292 per week, Fife Council £252, and Dunbartonshire £320.
- 4.4 Young people also pay £30 'board money' directly to the SLP. This has been reviewed with our care leavers and Horizons (the Throughcare and Aftercare service) and it has been agreed this remains a fair contribution.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 In order to ensure that our scheme adequately recognises the costs and commitments of SLPs, it is proposed that the rate paid by Angus Council to SLPs is set at £250 per week from 1 December 2021. This is an increase of £80 per week and will bring us more closely in line with the fees paid by other authorities. In line with the outcome of our consultation, there is no proposed change to the rate of young person's contributions.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is proposed to increase the weekly fee by £80 per week. Such a fee is only payable when a young person is living with an SLP. Assuming no void periods (with four young people in lodgings for the whole year), the increase totals £16,640 in a full financial year.
- 6.2 The proposed increase can be met from within the existing revenue budget for the current SLP provision. The SLP budget for 2021/22 is £63,800. Over the past three years this budget has been underspent with the highest costs being in 2018/19 when the spend was £44,485 and the lowest spend of £17,429 in 2020/21. There is capacity within the budget to increase fees as proposed.
- 6.3 The impact of the proposed uplift on any new placements delivered under the National Transfer Scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children will be met through a separate budget which is payable by the Home Office to each local authority for individual young people.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment is required.

9. CONSULTATION

Approved Supported Lodging Providers and care experienced young people and support staff have been consulted.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

REPORT AUTHOR:

Eunice McLennan - Service Leader (Resources) Children, Families and Justice

EMAIL DETAILS: PEOPLE@angus.gov.uk

Service users	Yes
Members of the public	No (except those who are SLPs)

Step 5: List the evidence/data/research that has been used in this assessment (links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance). This could include:

Internal data (e.g. customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).

Feedback from SLPs is that the current fee does not consistently cover all costs and offer a reasonable element of fee in recognition of their personal time, support, and commitment to young people.

Internal consultation (e.g. with staff, trade unions and any other services affected).

Discussions have also taken place with some care leavers/ support staff.

External data (e.g. Census, equality reports, equality evidence finder, performance reports, research, available statistics)

There is a national body of research which acknowledges the need for authorities to promote choice in placements for care leavers.

External consultation (e.g. partner organisations, national organisations, community groups, other councils).

Informal benchmarking with other local authorities who run similar schemes, highlighted that our current fee rate is substantially lower. For example, South Lanarkshire pay £292 per week, Fife Council £252, and Dunbartonshire £320.

Step 6: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the equality information you currently hold? No

Step 7: Are there potential differential impacts on protected characteristic groups? Please complete for each group, including details of the potential impact on those affected. Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each group. Please state the reason(s) why.

Age Impact

This policy is relevant to eligible young people (aged 16-21) and will help improve the availability of local resources and range of choice for young people leaving care. This is expected to lead to improved long-term outcomes for young people as they leave care and live independently.

The SLP is expected to provide a warm and comfortable living environment, basic clothing, toiletries, and food i.e., breakfast, lunch and an evening meal from the fee given. Feedback from SLPs is that the current fee does not consistently cover all costs and offer a reasonable element of fee in recognition of their personal time, support, and commitment to young people

Disability Impact Neutral

Gender reassignment Impact Neutral

Marriage and Civil Partnership Impact Neutral

Pregnancy/Maternity Impact Neutral

Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers) Impact Neutral

Religion or Belief Impact Neutral

Sex Impact Neutral

Sexual orientation Impact Neutral

Step 8: Consultation with any of the groups potentially affected

Feedback from SLPs is that the current fee does not consistently cover all costs and offer a reasonable element of fee in recognition of their personal time, support, and commitment to young people

Step 9: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce potentially negative impacts?

No negative impact on any groups.

Step 10: If a potentially negative impact has been identified, please state below the justification.

NA

Step 11: In what way does this proposal contribute to any or all of the public sector equality duty to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristics?

This proposal contributes to the duty to advance equality of opportunity for care leavers. It is a hugely important resource to have available for the critical few young people for whom this is the most suitable living arrangement. Resourcing this service is likely to lead to improved long term outcomes for young people as they leave care and live independently.

Step 12: Is there any action which could be taken to advance equalities in relation to this proposal?

No – these arrangements apply to care leavers between the ages of 16 and 21.

Step 13: FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

NA

Step 14: What arrangements will be put in place to monitor and review the Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment?

Reviewing ongoing feedback from SLPs and care leavers.

Step 15: Where will this Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment be published?

As part of committee papers

Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation. Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Eunice McLennan, Service Leader. Children, Families and Justice

Reviewed by: Pauline McKay, HR Adviser

Approved by: Kathryn Lindsay, Director Children Families and Justice