

## Children & Young People

# Requesting financial assistance towards the purchase of a vehicle for foster carers/connected persons

### Purpose:

The Purpose of this procedure is to outline the process for agreeing and providing financial assistance towards purchasing a vehicle for the needs of looked after children.

## Procedure

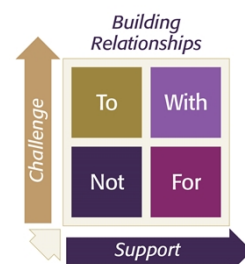
Approved by –

Published –

Review Date -

### RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

All contact and work received by families from the City of Wolverhampton Council within the City will be based around restorative practice principles. This is to ensure we improve the life outcomes for all children, young people and families we work with. In Wolverhampton we intend to use restorative principles and behaviours with colleagues as well as children and families, to help develop positive working relationships.



<b>REVIEW LOG</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
August 2017	1.0	New procedure.	
This system of recording review dates is designed to ensure staff at all times use the correct version of the up to date Policy. This system is used on all Wolverhampton City Council – Children and Young People Policies and Procedures.			

<b>CONSULTATION</b>
<p>The following people have been consulted on this policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Head of Service (Looked After Children)</b></li> <li>- <b>Finance</b></li> </ul>

## **Index**

- 1.0 General
- 2.0 Criteria
- 3.0 Type of Assistance
- 4.0 Process
- 5.0 Written Agreement

## **1.0 GENERAL**

Payments made by the Council for providing assistance towards vehicles are discretionary and not an entitlement and will be based on the circumstances of the carer and needs of the looked after child(ren) they are caring for. Each request would need to be supported by a clear business case.

Financial contributions for vehicles would result in the Council putting a signed agreement in place with the carer. The agreement is to ensure that if the carer was to cease fostering or sell the vehicle they may need to repay the financial support provided. Foster carers must be made aware of this at the outset of any discussions.

Grants are subject to a written agreement signed by the foster carer, Legal Services and a Head of Service to ensure that the vehicle is purchased as agreed.

Prior to a grant being agreed clear plans and requirements will be drawn up to form part of the agreement. Plans will be drawn up by the Social Work Unit Manager and Legal Services. This will be overseen and agreed by the Senior Social Work Manager.

We would expect the process from the point of the request is made until final approval for funding to be completed within 2 months as a maximum.

## **2.0 CRITERIA**

Any request must be able to satisfy the criteria below:

- The number of children placed (within foster carer approval) means the foster family and all children placed cannot be safely transported in carers own vehicle.
- Alternative forms of transport such as occasional taxi or occasional hired vehicles are not cost effective due to the anticipated length of placement or frequency of hire and do not provide best value.

## **3.0 TYPE OF ASSISTANCE**

- A grant to assist foster carers to trade up to a larger vehicle when next changing cars.
- This grant should reflect the difference between what carers would normally expect to pay when changing vehicles and the cost of the larger vehicle.
- A grant towards the cost of a larger vehicle outside of normal change period.

#### **4.0 PROCESS**

To avoid unrealistic expectations, it is essential that Supervising Social Workers do not make any commitment to foster carers that funding will be forthcoming. Supervising Social Workers are expected to consider all other viable options prior to following this process.

Carers are expected to contribute towards the cost of changing vehicles with the grant being used to pay the difference between a normal family vehicle and the larger people type carrier needed to transport everyone safely.

Grant contributions are expected to be a maximum of £10,000.

Grants will be made towards a good quality vehicle.

A report (see Resource Panel procedure) will need to be provided by the supervising social worker, signed by the Senior Social Work Manager and submitted to Resource Panel for consideration.

The carer will be expected to provide a quote for a vehicle in line with the agreed funding. Once agreed at Resource Panel and the Head of Looked after Children has seen the quote and written agreement has been signed by all parties and agreed by the Director of Children's Services, will the financial support be released. Only at the point the agreement is signed by all parties will the finances be released to the carer. Carers will be requested to provide a copy of the invoice for the vehicle in line with the agreement.

#### **5.0 WRITTEN AGREEMENT**

The Supervising Social Worker and Senior Social Work Manager – Fostering will explain that if funding for a vehicle is approved, approval will be subject to a claw-back agreement (if the carer resigns from fostering or the placement breaks down within 3 years of the financial support being provided) by City of Wolverhampton Council, but providing that:

- No capital or interest is charged while they remain foster parent(s) to the child/children they have fostered for 18 months (from the point the financial support is provided);
- Neither capital nor income is repayable should the applicant adopt or move into another legal permanent order for the child/children.

**Legal Services will draw up an agreement which will be signed prior to a grant being released. Each agreement will be unique to the case and circumstance (see appendix A). Agreements will be signed by the HofS**

(LAC), Legal Services and the Carer. Carers will be expected to provide documentation (invoice) to their supervising social worker once the vehicle is purchased.

## **6.0 FOSTER CARER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Foster Carer is responsible for the following:

- Obtaining three quotes based on the funding agreed and submitting them to the Fostering Service.
- Ensuring they are clear what the Local Authority is providing financial assistance for.
- Signing & complying with a written agreement with the City of Wolverhampton Council on how the money will be spent and paid back where indicated.

## **7.0 FINANCE DELEGATED LEVELS**

The following finance delegated levels are to be followed:

Amount	Authorisation
Up to £10,000	Resource Panel and Head of Service (LAC)

