

Members' Library Service Request Form

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Document Title	Payments to Share the Carers and Personal Assistants

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Authorised By	Lindsey Byrne
Designation	Head of Children's Services
Date	30/01/24

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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

MEETING DATE:

BY: Head of Children's Services

SUBJECT: Payments to Share the Carers and Personal Assistants

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on services provided for children with disabilities and changes to payment rates in line with national uplifts. This includes payment rates for Share the Care and the use of Personal Assistants (PAs) for children with disabilities in East Lothian.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Share the Care is East Lothian Council's short break service for children with a wide range of disabilities. The service provides essential support to children and their families by offering regular breaks in the carer's home, the child's home, or the local community. East Lothian currently have eight approved Share the Carers providing a range of supports to nine children. Two of these carers provide care during school holidays only.
- 3.2 Share the Carers who provide overnight or daytime care in their own homes are assessed to meet the National Care Standards for Foster Care and Family Placement Services. Share the Carers who provide care in the community or the child's home, undergo a proportionate assessment and appropriate checks. All Share the Care assessments are undertaken by the disability team and are approved through the East Lothian Fostering Panel.
- 3.3 Share the Care is the preferred method of respite for many families that the disability team support. Currently there are not enough Share the Carers to meet demand.

- 3.4 The role of Share the Carers is particularly complex. Carers are required to have an excellent working knowledge and understanding of specific disability to be able to support the children they are matched with. The nature of the role relies on carers working autonomously with extremely vulnerable children and they are closely supervised and supported by a dedicated senior practitioner within Children's Services.
- 3.5 The number of Share the Carers has fallen since 2019. Prior to the pandemic, there were thirteen carers and an additional three carers providing overnight support. Recruitment and retention has become increasingly challenging.
- 3.6 Share the Care is funded through the disability team budget and managed by the disability team leader.

Self-Directed Support and Options for Care

- 3.7 The risks and needs of each family are fully assessed and a framework of support is applied to determine the annual budget required to support the family. The principles of Self-Directed Support (SDS) promote the autonomy of parents to choose how best to meet the needs of their family and how to spend the allocated budget. Options include:
- Share the Care
 - Care at home
 - Overnight care in a residential provision
 - Employment of a personal assistant (PA)
- 3.8 Due to the national recruitment crisis in the care at home sector, there are very few care at home agencies who can provide a service to families in East Lothian.
- 3.9 Employment of PA's can be funded by a direct payment to parents. The hourly rate of pay for PA's is set by the Scottish Government. In East Lothian, families are finding it very difficult to recruit PA's, and the support they are assessed as requiring is not available via this route. This can result in the family not receiving the break they require which increases the risk of family breakdown and burn out. Some parents have been able to recruit a PA by topping up the national rate but this is not possible for most parents who regularly go without the support required.
- 3.10 Residential care is the most expensive respite option but can also be difficult to source depending on the needs of the child or young person.
- 3.11 Share the Care is considered to be a highly supportive early intervention service for families and is the most cost-effective way that support can be provided. Providing regular short breaks can reduce the risk of family breakdown and support children and their families to thrive and grow in their own communities in East Lothian.

- 3.12 The aims of the scheme support the outcomes of The Promise and the Children's Strategic Partnership Plan (2023-26). The Promise recommends that all children and young people receive care, support and nurturing within their home communities. Priority 1 of the Children's Strategic Partnership Plan pledges to 'increase community-based wellbeing opportunities for East Lothian's children and young people in safe spaces with trusted adults.
- 3.13 Due to the shortage of carers, the disability team has diversified and provided Share the Care family activity days over the summer holidays since 2022. The team have supported approximately twelve families each day. These days have been funded through Tesco Community Grants, Musselburgh Connected Communities, Active Schools, and the Performing Arts Service. There has been very positive feedback and these days are hugely valuable to the families who attend.

Share the Care – Rates of Pay

- 3.14 Share the Care rates were last reviewed in 2017-18, where payments changed from approx. £8 an hour to £10 an hour.
- 3.15 To meet the child's needs and reduce the risk of family breakdown it is acknowledged that Share the Care provides best value. Feedback through recruitment campaigns is highlighting that the current rate of pay is a barrier to recruitment. It is hoped that an increase in the rate will attract more applicants and increase East Lothian's capacity to provide local care for families and children with disabilities.

New Rates

	Hourly rate	2-hour rate	4-hour rate	20 hours a week	Annual rate
Current rate	£10.00	£20.00	£40.00	£200.00	£10,400.00
New basic rate	£13.80	£27.60	£55.20	£276.00	£14,352.00
New enhanced rate	£14.70	£29.40	£58.80	£294.00	£15,288.00
New Overnight allowance (9pm – 7am)	£75.00				

- 3.16 From January 1st 2024, East Lothian will offer £13.80 per hour as a standard rate with the option of £14.70 per hour where the young person's needs require an enhanced level of skill to maintain their safety and wellbeing.
- 3.17 In addition to this, an overnight allowance of £75.00 will acknowledge the significance of the responsibility and task. It is also fairer remuneration for the loss of sleep and the care tasks required through the night. Having an overnight allowance is likely to encourage Share the Carers to provide overnight short breaks in their own home. Providing families with a vital period of rest where they have the opportunity to do what they choose to.
- 3.18 The additional cost will be met from the disability team budget. Due to difficulties providing residential short breaks, this has created a small underspend, which can cover the cost of this increase. As part of East Lothian Council's Scheme of Delegation, the Head of Children's Services has approved this change.

Personal Assistants (PAs) Rates of Pay

- 3.19 As stated above, this rate is set nationally and Children's Services have amended their payment rates to remain in line with other Local Authorities.
- 3.20 The previous rate was £12.39 per hour and this has now increased to £12.81 per hour. For financial year 2023 / 2024 it is estimated that 6149 hours of PA support will be delivered to children and their family. The uplift to the hourly rate will see an increase of £9,635 which will be covered within the core budget for children with disabilities.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy changes as a result of the changes outlined above.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This matter has not been subject to an integrated impact assessment.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 East Lothian Share the Carers will be paid the new hourly and overnight rates and PAs will be paid the nationally uplifted hourly rate. It is hoped this will help to attract more Share the Carers and PAs to support children and their families in their own communities. This is necessary due to the growing demand for support and the ongoing national recruitment crises for care at home staff.
- 6.2 Share the Care and PA support provides the best value for money and is a crucial to support families before their situations become unmanageable.

Providing regular respite can avoid the need for families to require higher cost interventions and therefore provides a spend to save or cost avoidance opportunity.

6.3 The additional costs will be met through the existing disability team budget.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScHNkQ6yRxM&t=99s> This short video outlines some of the benefits of Share the Care.

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