

## **EQIA Fostering and Adoption**

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### **The proposal**

The proposal is to achieve the savings through a number of actions, totalling £50k in annual savings.

- The deletion of two part-time posts, one 0.5 in the North and one 0.3 in the West saving £36,400;
- Reduction in training costs for carers, making better use of online training, thereby reducing staff time and travel costs saving £4,000;
- Small reduction in allowances paid to prospective adopters when children are placed for adoption saving £ £6,600;
- Reduction in subsidy of Highlife Highland cards for carers saving £3,000

### **Staffing Impact**

The two part-time posts have been vacant for some time and therefore no individual staff member would be at risk, and there would be no impact on service users.

### **Reduction in training costs**

This will have no impact as training will be delivered using more effective methods.

### **Reduction in allowances paid to prospective adopters when children are placed for adoption**

This allowance relates to Christmas and holiday allowances paid to foster carers. In Highland this continues when a placement is with prospective adopters. The payments will cease as soon as the adoption is finalised. The Majority of other authorities cease these payments when a child is placed with prospective adopters. The impact of this on looked after children and prospective adopters is minimal and brings Highland into line with practice in other areas.

### **Reduction in subsidy of Highlife Highland cards for carers**

The purpose of this subsidy is to encourage the whole family; foster carers and prospective adopters to use HLH facilities together.

Carers pay £62, the adoption service pays £100 and Education budget pay the remaining £162. There is very low take up for this service.

The impact of this proposal is minimal. Other approaches that could be considered include only providing the card to those who confirm that they need it and will use it; or negotiating with HLH to only charge for each usage of the card.

## **Impact**

The impact of all of the proposals is minimal however consultation is required with carer groups.

In addition to these proposals financial support to carers will be reviewed for 2015/16 and proposals brought to Committee for approval regarding an inflationary uplift which has not been implemented in recent years. An EQIA will be carried out as part of the review.