**SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT SERVICES – GUIDANCE 2020**

**CONTENTS**

## Provision of Special Guardianship Support Services

## Financial Support

## 1.2 Notification to Special Guardians

1.3 Payments

1.4 How should Payments be used?

1.5 Review of Payments

1.6 Legal Costs

1.7 Contact

**2. Entitlement to Leaving Care Services**

**3. Staying Put**

**4. Additional Support Services**

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1 - SGO Support Services Assessment and Plan

Appendix 2 - Means Test Guidance

Appendix 3 – SGO Confirmation Letter

Appendix 4 – Allowance Review Form

Appendix 5 – Review of Financial Assistance Letter

**RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

Special Guardianship Policy

Special Guardianship Flowchart

What is a Special Guardianship Order? Information for those considering Special Guardianship in Warrington

**SCOPE**

This policy covers all aspects of Special Guardianship Support Services, including assessment for support services and financial support.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the [Special Guardianship Policy](https://intranet.wla.int/FamilyandWellbeing/Children%27s%20policies/Children%20in%20care%20%20policies/Special%20Guardianship%20Policy%20PO007.pdf) and the [Special Guardianship Flowchart](https://intranet.wla.int/FamilyandWellbeing/Children%27s%20policies/Flow%20charts/Special%20Guardianship%20Flowchart.pdf).

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION/GUIDANCE**

[Section 115 Adoption and Children Act 2002](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/38/section/115)

[Special Guardianship Regulations 2005](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1109/introduction/made)

[Special Guardianship (Amendment) Regulations 2016](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/111/contents/made)

[Standardised Means Test Model for Adoption and Special Guardianship Financial Support](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080305120229/everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/ig00027/)

**AMENDMENT**

This policy was revised and updated in June 2017 & 2018 to reflect the changes made to regulation 4 and 5 of the Special Guardianship Guidance.

## PROVISION OF SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT SERVICES

## Financial Support

## Children in Care

Where a child has previously been in care of Warrington Borough Council, the department will ordinarily match the fostering allowance payment made to the Special Guardian at the time the Order is made. This will not include Christmas, Holiday and Celebration payments. Deductions will be made for child benefit and any other credits claimed for the child, such as maintenance payments / child tax credits.

Any overpayment may result in the council seeking reimbursement of sums over-paid to the Special Guardian.

**Children in Need**

A request for financial support may be made where a child is previously unknown to Children’s Social Care or is at risk of coming into care. This will be considered in the Assessment & Support Plan. In these instances a means test will be undertaken by the Finance Officer in Fostering.

In calculating the amount of financial support payable, the Finance Officer will utilise the [Standardised Means Test Model for Adoption and Special Guardianship Financial Support](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080305120229/everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/ig00027/) (Ref: Appendix 2: Means Test Guidance)

When carrying out an assessment the allocated Social Worker will consider whether financial support over and above any regular allowance is necessary to enable the Special Guardian to care for the child who is subject to the Special Guardianship Order. Such support may include:

* + - Provision of furniture and domestic equipment
    - Alterations to and adaptations of the special guardian’s home *(Please see Applications for financial loan for adaptations or extensions Policy)*
    - Provision of means of transport and provision of clothing, toys and other items necessary for the purpose of caring for the child.

Additional payments may be made for such things as special dietary needs, special clothing, severe enuresis, encopresis or complex needs.

These payments will be made at the discretion of the Head of Service, and requests for such payments should be made via the allocated social worker and included in the Assessment & Support Plan. Unless stipulated, these are reviewed on an annual basis.

Please note; if financial assistance can be obtained via other benefit claims and/or health services, discretionary payments will not be made by the local authority.

The allocated Social Worker will consult with the SGO Social Worker through the financial assessment and prior to presenting the SGO Assessment & Support Plan to the relevant Head of Service for approval. Following approval by the Head of Service the decision may be shared with the Special Guardian.

If the SGO Assessment & Support Plan is approved, on the date of the Special Guardianship Order is made the Finance Officer will complete the relevant MOSAIC workflow. Payments will be made on a fortnightly basis.

The allocated Social Worker must load the change of legal status and the Finance Officer load the details of the financial payments onto MOSAIC.

## 1.2 Notification to Special Guardians

The relevant Head of Service must notify the Special Guardian in advance about arrangements to pay them financial support under the scheme using the SGO Confirmation Letter (Ref: Appendix 3 – SGO Confirmation Letter and send it out by post to the Special Guardian within five working days of the Financial Support being agreed.

The Special Guardian will have 28 days to appeal any decision made by Warrington Borough Council by writing to the relevant Head of Service. The decision will then be reviewed by the Director of Children’s Services.

## 1.3 Payments

Payments will be made through direct payments into a nominated bank account although in exceptional circumstances other arrangements may be made with the agreement of the relevant Head of Service.

Regular payments will be made fortnightly.

Financial support under the scheme ceases to be payable when the:

1. Child ceases to have his home with the Special Guardian (this does not apply to temporary periods of absence for up to three months – e.g. hospital admission as an in-patient).
2. Child ceases full-time education or training and commences employment.
3. Child qualifies in his/her own right for Universal Credit.
4. Child reaches 18 unless continuing with full-time education or training in which case the financial support will continue until the end of the academic year in which s/he turns 18.
5. Financial circumstances of the Special Guardian or the child change. Any Special Guardian who is in receipt of Universal Credit will receive the maximum Special Guardianship Allowance. If they become ineligible for Universal Credit they must inform the council **within 14 days of being notified** failing which they will have their Special Guardianship Allowance terminated or suspended. Please note a review of payments will usually take place in these circumstances.

Special guardians are required to notify in writing the relevant Head of Service immediately of any change of circumstances which might, in the context of the original agreement, result in the financial support being increased, reduced or terminated. Any failure to do so may result in the council seeking reimbursement of sums over-paid to the Special Guardian.

**1.4 How should Payments be used?**

## The Fostering Network gives a guide on how fostering allowances can be broken down into percentages under various components. We also apply this rationale to Special Guardianship payments:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| EXPENDITURE | % |
| Food | 30 - 34 |
| Clothing | 22 - 26 |
| Transport | 7 - 11 |
| Personal & Activities | 6 - 17 |
| Household | 18 - 30 |

## Variations in percentages are mainly associated with different ages of children and young people.

## Whilst this provides a useful guide, it is not intended to be rigid. However, within the categories of clothing, activities and personal items, Special Guardians are expected to be able to evidence expenditure if requested.

## Children subject to Special Guardianship should never perceive that they are being treated differently to the carer’s own children; carers can be supported in managing this issue sensitively. Consideration should be given to assisting children to budget appropriately; older children must be supported in choosing their own clothes and personal items as a means of supporting them towards independence.

## 1.5 Review of Payments

An annual review will be undertaken in accordance with this Policy.

An annual review will be triggered by the Finance Officer who will ask the Special Guardian to:

1. Provide evidence that the child benefit continues to be paid (e.g. a copy of the bank statement or most recent allowance statement).
2. Provide evidence that there has been no significant change in circumstances.
3. Supply the Finance Officer with details and evidence of their income and outgoings to make an assessment of their continuing need for financial support.

If these requirements are not complied with the relevant Head of Service will suspend or terminate payments 28 days after a reminder has been sent to the Special Guardian for the relevant information.

Once the evidence has been received the Finance Officer will revisit the details of the SGO Assessment & Plan and complete the Allowance Review Form where there has been a change in circumstances.

If it appears to the council that there has been a change in circumstances within the period before the next annual review then the review will be arranged at an earlier date.

The Finance Officer will present the findings of the Allowance Review Form to the relevant Head of Service for approval.

Any decision will be communicated to the Special Guardian using the Review of the Financial Assistance Letter (Ref: Appendix 5 – Review of Financial Assistance Letter).

The Special Guardian will have the right to appeal against any variation of the payment within 28 days of the date of the Letter.

Appeals should be made to Head of Service. The decision will then be reviewed by the Director of Children’s Services.

An annual review will be completed for as long as a Special Guardianship allowance is in place.

## 1.6 Legal Costs

Warrington Borough Council may provide financial support as a contribution towards, or payment of, the legal costs (including court fees) of a Special Guardian or prospective Special Guardian when a child is in care, or otherwise would be, when associated with:

1. The making of a Special Guardianship Order or any application to vary or discharge such an order
2. An application for an order under the Children Act 1989 section 8
3. An order for financial provision to be made for the benefit of the child.

Such a payment will be contingent upon the relevant Head of Service considering that the application is necessary and in the best interests of the child; that any application for an order falling within (a) – (c) above is likely to succeed; that legal representation is necessary; and that funding for legal representation is not otherwise reasonably available.

In the majority of care cases where the Special Guardianship Order is part of the Council’s care plan for the child, funding for legal advice to the prospective special guardians on the content of the SGO support plan will be agreed up to a maximum of 2 hours at public funding rates unless the Head of Service determines additional funding is appropriate.

In deciding whether to contribute towards, or pay, legal costs the council will also take into account the financial circumstances of the Special Guardian and the child subject to the Special Guardianship Order other than where the legal costs are in respect of an application for a SGO for a child who is in the care and the council supports the making of a SGO.

The solicitor acting for the proposed Special Guardian will be expected to agree to work at the equivalent of public funding rates and is expected to be an accredited member of the Law Society’s Children Panel.

## 1.7 Contact

At the time of completing the Special Guardianship Assessment & Support Plan Report for court the agreed plan for Contact should be discussed and the contents formally agreed by the prospective Special Guardian(s). The Social Worker should have sought the views of birth parents and anyone holding parental responsibility and attempt to reach an agreement about the appropriate levels of contact and support prior to the Order being agreed. Where children have siblings in other placements all professionals involved should meet up to ensure any other contact arrangements already in place are not jeopardised by the new plans.

A meeting will be chaired by the relevant Service Manager and in cases where contact is contested advice from Legal Services should be sought.

Once the contact arrangements have been agreed these should be included in the Special Guardianship Support Services Plan (Ref: Special Guardianship Support Services Policy).

The Special Guardians would be expected to supervise contact arrangements where necessary.

## Arrangements for contact should be sent to the allocated Social Worker to be included in the [SGO Assessment & Plan](#_bookmark14)

## Entitlement to Leaving Care Services

Where a child has become eligible for Care Leaving Services, i.e. in care for a total of 13 weeks from the age of 14 years including at some point at the age of 16 or 17 years, then s/he remains eligible for those services following the making of a Special Guardianship Order.

If this criteria is met then the young person will be allocated a Personal Adviser prior to the making of the Special Guardianship Order.

The Personal Adviser will undertake a Pathway Plan Assessment to determine need and whether support services are required.

A Pathway Plan will be developed detailing the support requirements of the young person and how this will be delivered.

It is anticipated that some young people may be eligible for financial support equivalent to the leaving care grant to enable them to set up their own independent accommodation near to their employment. This should be written into the support plan if this is required to meet a need where the young person would be disadvantaged. This can be agreed by the Head of Service. This will not be agreed unless it is written into the plan except in exceptional circumstances.

If the young person wishes to take part in a university course then a grant to fund this may be payable in the same way that this is open to care leavers. This should be addressed in the Pathway Plan. (Ref: [Leaving Care Financial Policy](https://intranet.wla.int/FamilyandWellbeing/Leaving%20care%20%20policies/Leaving%20Care%20-%20Financial%20Policy%20P045.pdf)).

1. **Staying Put**

When a child is ‘eligible’ for Leaving Care Services (Section 2) the Head of Service can use their discretion in respect of agreeing to pay the Special Guardian the equivalent of Special Guardianship Allowance, when the young person wishes to remain living with the Special Guardian until they reach the age of 21. (Ref: Staying Put Policy).

**4. Additional Support Services**

Warrington currently have a support team called the Families First Team. The team offer interventions to families who require support in order to help prevent the breakdown of a child’s placement. The Families First Team can provide assistance with mediation and contact with birth parents. Also they can provide additional training and services.

**Appendix 1 – SGO Support Services Assessment and Plan (Template)**

Author:

Date:

Filed on behalf of the Applicant

CASE NUMBER:

BEFORE THE FAMILY COURT SITTING IN ….

IN THE MATTER OF THE CHILDREN ACT 1989

IN THE MATTER OF

BETWEEN

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL Applicant

(Child Acting by her Guardian to be appointed)

Second Respondent

**-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**

SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ASSESSMENT & SUPPORT PLAN – (Name of Child)

Aim of the Special Guardianship Support Plan:

HEALTH:

Anticipated future medical needs:

Relevant support services:

EDUCATION:

Any specific/additional needs:

Relevant support services:

EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DEVELOPMENT:

Relevant support services:

CONTACT:

Current and future needs:

Relevant support services:

FINANCIAL:

Future allowance:

Monitoring and Review:

Signed:

Social Worker:

Date:

Signed:

Head of Service:

Date:

**Appendix 2 – Means Test Guidance**

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**STANDARDISED MEANS TEST MODEL FOR ADOPTION AND SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

**Introduction**

1. The Department for Education and Skills has developed a model means test for adoption and special guardianship financial support. The model has been tested with various local authorities and modifications made as a result.
2. **Please note that this test is a suggested model only**. It is not a statutory requirement for local authorities to use this model in place of their existing system. However, we do recommend its use by local authorities, as we believe that the model developed is fair and that adoptive or special guardian families would benefit from a consistent approach by local authorities.
3. The model proposed is intended to deliver a standard approach to arriving at adoption support or special guardianship support payments (if not always a standard payment), so that adopters and special guardians are treated equitably within the context of what is affordable within existing local authority budgets.
4. For any queries about the model, please contact the Adoption Team on adoption.team@dfes.gsi.gov.uk.

**Guidance on using means test model**

*General*

1. The model is based on disposable income, and so provides a thorough analysis of the family’s financial situation. Key principles of the test are set out in this section.
2. The regulations on adoption and special guardianship support services[[1]](#footnote-1) set out that there must be no reward element in financial payments other than as a transitional provision for foster carers adopting or becoming special guardians for a child for whom they are currently caring.
3. The overall approach used in the test is a ‘snapshot’ of the family’s current circumstances. By this, we mean that if the adopted or special guardian child is already living with the prospective adopters or adoptive parents/special guardian, then the child should be included in the calculations. If the child is not yet placed with the prospective adopters/special guardian, then the child should not be included in the calculations.
4. If a family is in receipt of Income Support, we recommend that the local authority pay the family the applicable maximum payment without assessing their income/expenditure in this test. The figure paid to the family should not include any deductions for child benefit (as they are in receipt of Income Support).
5. Financial support paid to adoptive parents or special guardians under the regulations cannot duplicate (or be a substitute for) any payment to which adopters or special guardians would be entitled under the tax and benefit system. We recommend that local authorities only include benefits that are currently being paid to members of the household. If the local authority believe that there are other benefits to which the household would be entitled, this should be pointed out to the adopters or special guardian. A reassessment after 3 months could then be made which would capture all of the new benefits being received. This could be the case where, for example, a child has recently been placed with the prospective adopters or special guardian, and they have not yet claimed child tax credit.
6. The test is currently worked out on a monthly basis. If local authorities prefer to use weekly figures, the model can be adapted for this.

*PROJECTED FAMILY INCOME*

*Section 1i - Pay*

1. This section should include basic net monthly pay, before any deductions for savings schemes, social clubs, accommodation/food and loans. However, the income figure used should exclude any payments into pension funds.
2. Where one (or both) of the parents or special guardian is self-employed, the only income which should be considered is ‘drawings’ as this is the equivalent of pay from an employer. Any profit from the business sitting in a bank account (and thereby not being reinvested) should be taken into account as capital under section 1iv: other sources of income.
3. If one (or both) of the parents or special guardian receives overtime, fees, bonus/commission and/or gratuities on a regular basis (for example annual bonuses) should be included as part of the monthly payment (i.e. if the payments are annual, these should be divided by 12 to give a monthly amount to be included in the ‘basic net monthly pay’ section). If local authorities are using weekly figures, the extra income should be calculated on this basis.

*Section 1ii – Benefits and pensions (parents)*

1. Where the parents or special guardian receive individual benefits (i.e. those that are not calculated on a household basis) these should be included in this section. If the benefit payments are currently received weekly, please multiply by 52 and divide by 12 to give a monthly amount. Benefits to be entered in this section are:

* Employer’s sick pay (after compulsory deductions)
* Incapacity benefit
* Statutory maternity, paternity and/or adoption pay and/or maternity allowance
* Bereavement benefit
* Working tax credit (if paid directly and not as part of pay and excluding any childcare element received)
* All pension payments received
* Other benefits

1. In relation to working tax credit, our understanding is that an employed person currently receives working tax credit within pay from his employer. If this is the case, the amount will be included in the basic net monthly pay section. All those who receive working tax credit will receive an award notice which sets out how much they will receive. This award notice will provide the information needed for this section of the test.
2. Where a childcare element is paid as part of the working tax credit, this should be disregarded for the income section of the test. The existence of this type of credit needs to be considered when completing the expenditure section on childcare (see below).
3. Any other benefits received by the parents, for example help with costs associated with disability or mobility, should be recorded in the ‘other benefits’ section.

*Section 1iii – Benefits (family/children)*

1. Where benefits are received by the family or household, as opposed to being paid directly to the parents, they should be recorded in this section. This is primarily for benefits which are calculated on the basis of household composition. Benefits to be included in this section are:

* Income Support
* Jobseeker’s Allowance
* Child tax credit per household
* Child benefit for each child, excluding the child/children who are the subject of this assessment application

1. If a member of the household receives Income Support or Jobseeker’s Allowance, the amount per household should be recorded here. Also see paragraph 8 above, where it is recommended that where the only income families receive is Income Support, the applicable maximum payment should be made to the family.
2. Benefits which should be included in this section are child tax credit received for each child, at the time that the test is applied. All those who received child tax credit should receive an award notice setting out how much they will receive.
3. Child benefit should be included for each child living in the household, excluding the child/children who are the subject of this assessment application. Current rates for child benefit can be found by clicking [here](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit/eligible.htm#howmuch).
4. Housing benefit should also be excluded from this section, as it is disregarded for the purposes of the expenditure section below.

*Section 1iv – Other sources of income*

1. Where the family receive income from capital, savings and/or investments, this should be assessed in terms of net monthly interest only, as paid. This is the income that is routinely available to the family, and should be clearly shown on statements/similar. Any interest received from Government Child Trust Funds should not be included in this section.
2. If the family receive income from boarders/lodgers, this should be calculated on a weekly basis (then multiplied by 52 and divided by 12 to give a monthly amount if the test is being completed on a monthly basis). To calculate the weekly income, all weekly payments for board and lodging must be added together, a £20 disregard applied and then 50% of any excess over £20 for each person deducted. This is how income from boarders/lodgers is calculated for income support purposes.
3. Examples of the approach for income from boarders/lodgers are as follows:

**Boarder/lodger 1**

Weekly payment £55

Deduct £20 (disregard) -£20

£35

Deduct 50% of remainder -£17.50

**Income from boarder/lodger 1 £17.50**

**Boarder/lodger 2**

Weekly payment £60

Deduct £20 (disregard) -£20

£40

Deduct 50% -£20

**Income from boarder/lodger 2 £20**

1. Where the family receive income from rent on an unfurnished property, this should be calculated on the following basis: monthly income received in rent after the deduction of any costs. Deductions can be made for:
   * Interest payments on the mortgage (but not mortgage capital payments);
   * Repairs;
   * Council tax (if paid by the family being assessed)
   * Agents’ fees; and
   * Insurance (buildings)
2. If income is received from furnished properties, the same calculation applies as above for unfurnished property, but an extra 10% deduction from the monthly rent received can be made as a ‘wear and tear allowance’.
3. The approach used in paragraphs 25 and 26 above is consistent with that used for calculating income from property for the purposes of income tax. If the person who is the subject of the assessment has completed a recent tax return, local authorities may ask to see a copy of this. The tax return should have the information needed for this section of the test.
4. Other income to take into consideration includes maintenance payments received for any child in the household and existing adoption or special guardian allowances (including enhancements for special needs) paid for any child. This latter may be paid where, for example, the family have adopted or become a special guardian for a child with a different local authority and therefore receive a separate allowance.

*Section 1v – Income relating to the child/children being adopted or becoming a special guardian child*

1. This section relates to the child/children being adopted or becoming a special guardian child only. Any regular interest on capital and/or income in which the child/children has a legal interest and entitlement should be included here. This could be, for example, a savings account, trust fund, property or other legacy.
2. Payments from Criminal Injuries Compensation Awards should not be included. Any interest received from Government Child Trust Funds should not be included in this section.
3. Please also consider any other income to which the child/children might be entitled. This section does not record child benefit for the adopted or special guardian child, which will be deducted from the final payment resulting from this means test.

*Income calculation*

1. The means test spreadsheet will automatically calculate the household monthly income, and will also apply a 20% disregard to this income figure.

*PROJECTED FAMILY EXPENDITURE*

*Section 2i – Home expenditure*

1. This section should include mortgage payments, made up of capital and interest, and also including any endowment payments linked to the mortgage. If the family pays rent, the monthly amount actually paid should be recorded here, after any deductions made for housing benefit. The only other outgoing which should be included in this section is council tax paid; this should be the amount paid after the deduction of any council tax benefit received by the household or discount for single adult households or second homes.

*Section 2ii – Other outgoings*

1. Where the family pay regular monthly repayments on loans for housing improvement (e.g. extensions/new kitchens) or transport costs (e.g. new car), we suggest that these are included in this section. Local authorities will need to decide in relation to the individual circumstances as to whether a loan repayment should be included here. Some loans may have been taken out by the adoptive or special guardian family to meet a new need incurred as a result of the adoption or special guardianship order (e.g. buying a larger car).
2. Other payments which can be included in this section include maintenance payments, payments relating to court orders, private pension contributions and national insurance if self-employed or not working.
3. The section for ‘reasonable’ child care costs will need to be determined by each local authority depending on (a) the circumstances of the family in question (e.g. how many hours the parents work); and (b) local costs for child care services. Costs recorded in this section should be those paid after any childcare element paid as part of the parents’ working tax credit. All those who receive working tax credit will receive an award notice which sets out how much they will receive.

*Section 2iii – Core regular family expenditure*

1. General household expenditure on items such as food, transport, clothes, recreation should be calculated using the Income Support allowance rates, but increased by 25%. The latest rates can be found by clicking [here](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/cms.asp?Page=/Home/Customers/WorkingAgeBenefits/493#howmuch). The calculations below are based on the rates for 2005-6 as an indication:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Personal Allowance** | **Normal monthly rate** | **125% of normal monthly rate (for use in this means test)** |
| Single adult aged 16-17 | £146.68 | £183.35 |
| Single adult aged 18-24 | £192.83 | £241.04 |
| Single adult aged 25 or over | £243.53 | £304.41 |
| Couples both aged 18 or over | £381.98 | £477.48 |
| Lone parent aged 16-17 | £146.68 | £183.35 |
| Lone parent aged 18 or over | £243.53 | £304.41 |
| Dependent children | £190.15 | £237.69 |

1. In completing the means test, local authorities will need to calculate the appropriate figure for the family being assessed. For example, for a household with a couple (parents) and 2 dependent children the core regular family expenditure should be recorded as £952.86 (made up of couple’s allowance of £477.48 and 2 allowances for dependent children of £237.69 each).

*CALCULATION*

1. The spreadsheet will calculate the household’s monthly disposable income.
2. Local authorities will need to enter the appropriate maximum payment for the household, depending on the number and age of the child/children being adopted or becoming special guardian children, and the circumstances of the child e.g. special needs.
3. We understand that most local authorities will have a payment structure for fostering allowances consisting of a core allowance paid for all children, plus enhancements linked to, for example, special needs. This payment structure will be linked to local variations in the cost of living and individual local authority budgets. We recommend that adoption and special guardianship maximum payments are tied to these allowances. This would result in a different maximum payment in individual cases, determined by the needs of the child, against which amount the test is run.
4. After the local authority maximum payment has been entered manually, the box marked ‘amount of payment to adopters or special guardian’ will show the payment that the test has calculated for adopters or the special guardian. This amount is calculated on the following basis:
   * Where the family’s disposable income is less than £0, the spreadsheet will show the local authority’s maximum payment. This is because the adopters or special guardian have provided evidence via the disposable income calculation that shows they do not have the means to accommodate any further expenditure.
   * Where the family’s disposable income is higher than £0, the spreadsheet will calculate a figure that is a percentage of the maximum payment. As the disposable income figure rises above zero, the percentage of the maximum payment that the adopters or special guardian be tapered at a set rate of 50%. This rate means that for every pound of monthly disposable income a family is found to have, they will have 50 pence deducted from the monthly maximum payment.
5. We understand that many local authorities determine payments to adopters or special guardians based on the allowances they pay foster carers, and then deduct child benefit from the final amount. This is to reflect that child benefit can be claimed by adopters and special guardians but not foster carers. The appropriate amount of child benefit for the child/children who are the subject of the test should be entered into the spreadsheet. Please note that the maximum payment used to calculate the payment to adopters should not take into account any child benefit the adopters might receive (i.e. should not deduct it) as the spreadsheet allows the child benefit to be deducted after the payment has been calculated.
6. The final payment shown will be the calculation of the means test minus child benefit entered by the local authority.

**Appendix 3 - SGO Confirmation Letter**





Dear….

Application for Financial Assistance under a Special Guardianship Order in respect of

**Subjects Details:**

**Date of SGO**:

Your Social Worker has requested that the Local Authority financially support the placement of the above named child who is subject to a Special Guardianship Order.

I can confirm that the Local Authority will continue to financially support the placement as outlined in the table below, subject to an annual financial review.

Your financial support will continue until ….

**Financial Support Agreed on the basis of Financial Assessment**

**Payment Details Weekly Amount Payment Start Date In Respect of**

Payment will be made fortnightly.

The allowance will cease on expiry of the Order or earlier if the child does not remain in your care, obtains full time employment, leaves your home to live independently or if the Order is rescinded by the Courts.

It is your responsibility to notify the Local Authority of any of the above changes including change of address, contact details or financial changes.

If there are any elements within this document which you do not agree with, please contact us within 28 days of the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Head of Service

**Appendix 4 - Allowance Review Form**

**ALLOWANCE REVIEW FORM**

##### SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP

##### **Date:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Child** |  |
| **Name of Carer** |  |
| **Address of Carer** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome of Financial Assessment Review** | |
| Any changes | Yes € No € |
| New financial assessment required | Yes € No € |
| Details/Comments |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Service Provision (Special Guardianship)**  Are the services detailed in the Special Guardianship Support Plan still being provided and used? | |
| **Service** |  |
|  | Yes € No € |
|  | Yes € No € |
|  | Yes € No € |
|  | Yes € No € |
| Any Comments | |
|  | |

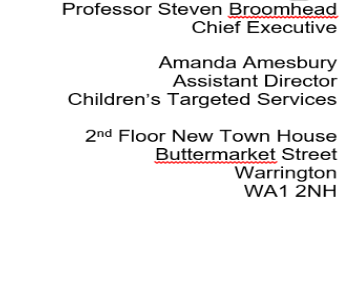
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Has there been any change in circumstances that would affect the provision of support services or financial payments?**  Please detail below | |
|  | |
| Does the child still live with carer? | Yes € No € |
| Has the child started work? | Yes € No € |
| Is the child in receipt of any benefits? | Yes € No € |
| If yes, please state which benefit and how much |  |
| Has the Special Guardian provided details and evidence of their income | Yes € No € |
| **Please state their income** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Any Other Information |
|  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Review Decisions **(To be completed by Service Manager)** | | | |
|  | | | |
| Signature |  | Date |  |
| Next Review due |  | | |

**Appendix 5 – Review of Financial Assistance Letter**

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Dear….

**Review of Financial Assistance under a Special Guardianship Order in respect of**

The review of your Special Guardianship Allowance has been undertaken and I can confirm that there will be

Option 1 - No change to your SGO financial support at this time

Option 2 – The following changes as detailed.

If you need to discuss this further, please contact the department on 01925446235.

Yours sincerely

Head of Service

1. The Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005 (SI 2005/691) and the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 (SI 2005/1109) both available at www.opsi.gov.uk. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)