# SCHEDULE 2B

# FOSTER TIERING SPECIFICATION

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| **1. Rationale & Background** |
| * 1. **Local context**

Torbay Foster Care Service introduced a new single payment rate in October 2013 of £400 per week per child. This payment rate was introduced primarily to facilitate the recruitment of high quality Foster Carers to enable the Torbay Local Authority to meet its sufficiency requirements. This achieved recruitment of Foster Carers into Torbay and was largely successful.As the requirements of any service are subject to change, Torbay is now considering the reintroduction of three levels of fostering allowances. This will provide a structure that will recognise carers skills / and training and will provide a structure within which they can progress and develop. Over the last 12 months Torbay Council has invested significantly in its Fostering Service. Extensive Thrive training has been provided to Foster Carers and Children’s Social Care Staff to enable them to better understand and meet the needs of Torbay’s Looked After Children. Over the next 12 months work will be undertaken to ensure this training is embedded and integrated with the models use in schools. In addition to this The Fostering Changes Programme will be introduced, which provides knowledge and practical skills that enable Foster Carers to enhance child behaviour and security. |
| **2. Specification for Approved Foster Carers Levels 1, 2 and 3** |
| **2.1 Introduction**Torbay Foster Care Service is reintroducing payment Levels for Foster Carers Approved by the Foster Care Service. The payment Levels will be linked to the Skills of the Carer/s. There will be three levels of Fostering Allowances. Level 1 being the lowest and Level 3 being the highest. There is no link between the fostering allowances that any carer is being paid to the current presenting issues of any child placed. The service fully recognises that children and young people (CYP) will move through changing phases as they grow which present differing and highly variable challenges.

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| **Tier Level** | **Description** |
| Level One | This is the foundation level for foster carers. The essential training requirements outlined within this document will need to be completed. The majority of newly approved carers, without significant previous experience, will begin their fostering role at this level. The majority of family carers, assessed as Connected Person’s Foster Carers will be within this level. The Level 1 training requirements underpin safe child care. Progression to Level 2 can be considered following demonstration of a range of Skills, identified below and may occur at the carers annual review. Progression to Level 2 is not a requirement. *See Moving between Fostering Level Document.*  |
| Level Two | This is the intermediate level. The essential training requirements listed below will be required as well as the additional Level 2 requirements identified subsequently. Newly approved carers with previous relevant experience may be assessed as having the skills to be Level 2 carers. Progression to Level 3 may be assessed as appropriate through the annual review process.  |
| Level Three | These foster carers will be skilled carers able to care for children and young people with complex needs. This does not mean that only C /YP with complex needs will be placed with these carers. These Foster carers will have undertaken extensive training which is detailed within this document, including Thrive and Fostering Changes, when they become available. The Foster Carers will evidence being able to integrate these skills into their daily interactions with the children and young people they care for.  |

2.2 Essential Foundation Requirements Relevant to all Fostering Levels* Enjoy CYP. Share hobbies with the children.
* Adhere to the child or young person’s (CYP) Care Plan.
* To offer placements to CYP ‘matched’ as appropriate.
* To keep CYP’s social worker fully informed.
* To contribute to Statutory Reviews.
* To attend Training as identified between the care and FSW and / panel. (Positively participate and be genuinely open to learning).
* A willingness to learn new centred skills, for example Thrive or Makaton.
* To hold meetings in own home where risk assessed as appropriate.
* To maintain appropriate records – to provide diary records weekly (electronically).
* To be actively involved in CYP educational attainment.
* To attend support groups. (Detail specified in subsequent sections).
* To provide transportation to school, contact, hobbies etc.
* Provide a safe and secure environment.
* Support CYP’s emotional process. Have the ability to listen.
* Provide consistent boundaries and managing behaviour appropriately.
* To help and encourage the young person to grow in self esteem and to develop a positive identity.
* To advocate on behalf of the CYP.
* Be willing and able to support transitions, including bridging CYP to permanence and preparation for use of respite.
* Understand child development, including adolescence.
* Provide Safe, Secure and Stimulating home for CYP.
* Ensure Health and Safety of CYP.
* To help CYP cope with separation and loss and come to terms with past life experiences.
* To help CYP maintain a positive view of their family.
* Be willing to supervise contact, in line with a risk assessment which confirms this is appropriate.
* To help CYP reach their potential. Maintain a ‘strengths based’ perspective, encouraging young people to recognise their abilities.
* Willingness to maintain an ongoing relationship in the child’s best interest e.g. staying put placement changes.
* Maintain empathy, resilience and flexibility.
* Always act in a professional and respectful manner.

**2.3** **Level 1 Requirements*** Experience of children but not necessarily within fostering.
* Be willing to supervise contact, in line with a risk assessment which confirms this is appropriate.
* Attend essential training, including Child Protection and First Aid. (see attached training schedule.
* Attend and contribute to Child Care Reviews, with Fostering Social Worker support.
* Attend at least 3 support groups each year.
* Keep diary records and forward these the child’s social worker weekly. Fostering Social Worker will agree suitable quality and detail.

**2.4 Level 2 Requirements**Have a minimum of 1 years’ experience of the fostering role.* Growing expectation to supervise contact (if risk assessed as appropriate to do so).
* Submit written summary reports for CYP’s CLA reviews with Fostering Social Worker support.
* Attend 6 support groups in a 12 month period.
* Achieve Level 2 training requirements.
* Keep diary recordings and forward these to the Child’s social worker weekly. Fostering Social Workers will agree suitable quality and detail.

**2.5** **Level 3 Requirements*** At least 3 years’ experience.
* Attend 10 support groups in a 12 month period.
* Have the skills to care for CYP with complex needs.
* Produce thorough reports for CYP CLA reviews with Fostering Social Worker support.
* Complete Level 3 training requirements.
* Keep diary recordings and forward these to the Child’s social worker weekly. Fostering Social Workers will agree suitable quality and detail.

**2.6 Summary Table**A summary of the requirements is at Appendix One to this Schedule |
| **3. Training Requirements** |
| **3.1 Core Training Requirements****3.1.1 Level 1** * Paediatric First Aid
* Understanding Attachment
* Safer Caring
* Supervising Contact For Foster Carers
* Delegating Authority for Foster carers
* Record Keeping for Foster Carers
* Child Protection
* Training and Development Standards for Foster carers – online (TDS –CWDC)
* Fostering Changes

**3.1.2 Level 2*** Paediatric First Aid
* Understanding Attachment
* Safer Caring
* Supervising Contact For Foster Carers
* Record Keeping for Foster Carers
* Delegating Authority for Foster carers
* TDS -CWDC

Plus* Promoting Resilience in LAC Children (Promoting Positive Behaviours (this course is to l be renamed ‘Working with traumatised children with challenging behaviour - incorporating PACE ideas’.)
* Life Story Work
* Education for LAC
* Leaving care and transitions
* Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Persons
* THRIVE Training
* Fostering Changes

**3.1.3 Level 3** * Paediatric First Aid
* Understanding Attachment
* Safer Caring
* Supervising Contact For Foster Carers
* Record Keeping for Foster Carers
* Delegating Authority for Foster carers
* TDS -CWDC
* Promoting Resilience in LAC Children (Promoting Positive Behaviours. This course will be called in the future Working with traumatised children with challenging behaviour - incorporating PACE ideas.)
* Life Story WorkEducation for LAC
* Leaving care and transitions
* Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Persons

Plus* Therapeutic Parenting Course– carers are able to promote a therapeutic environment
* THRIVE- carers are able to implement THRIVE principles in working with young people
* Fostering Changes.
* Level 3 in Social Care (optional)
* DDP – (if appropriate and identified with support plan for child / young person).

**3.2 Additional Training Requirements** * Bridging Placements
* LADO Role and Allegations Against Foster Carers
* Introduction to Domestic Abuse
* Internet Safety
* An introduction to Understand Self Harm Behaviours
* An introduction to Understand Eating Disorders
* Mindfulness
* Booster Sessions re Mental Health and LAC
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| **4. Performance Management** |
| **4.1 Introduction**Fostering Social Workers will provide Statutory Supervision in line with Fostering Regulations, Guidance and National Minimum Standards 2011. During Supervision Fostering Social Workers will explore how the expectations of a Foster Carers current Fostering Level are being met. **4.2 Initial Assessment**When Foster Carers, whether Mainstream, or Connected Persons Carers are initially assessed, their assessor will recommend that they are approved at a specific level. The level the Foster Carer/s are then approved at, will represent the skill base that the carer/s currently possess. **4.3 Process for Advancement**Foster Carers are able to evidence, during monthly supervision, throughout any year of approval that they have acquired and have demonstrated the skills needed to be considered for a move to a higher level. Foster Carers will need to provide sufficient evidence, demonstrated over a period of time to be considered for progression to the next fostering level. The Foster Carer would then inform their fostering social worker at the time of their annual review of their formal request to be considered for advancement to a higher level of Fostering Allowance. Following the formal request the Fostering Social Worker will consider the evidence and outcome of the annual review and make a recommendation to Panel that the Foster Carer either be approved for advancement or not. On this guidance and examination of the evidence, Panel will then make their recommendation accordingly to the Authority’s Decision Maker to sanction, or not, the Foster Carers move to a higher Fostering Allowance Level.Panel will not discuss allowances as part of this process.**4.4 Process for Reversion and Deregistration**If any expectations are not being met. Foster Carers will be given the opportunity between supervision visits to achieve any particular expectation/s. If a Fostering Social Workers reports, during their own supervision, that a Foster Carer is not achieving expectations despite guidance and discussion, then they can agree with the Fostering Service Manager that a Contract Action Plan is issued. The Contract Action Plan will outline Contract expectations not being met and identify timescales within which the Foster Carer/s must achieve the expectations. Timescales for expectations will vary, for example,* To have undertaken a particular type of training may be given the timescale of three months, because that is when the training will be available.
* Where producing diary sheets of appropriate detail may be given the time scale of one week, because no delay is necessary.

If the expectations are achieved within timescales, the Contract Action Plan will be recorded as completed adequately and the Foster Carer/s recorded as now completing their contractual requirements. If the Contract Action Plan is not completed within timescales, a report and the Contract Action Plan will be presented by the Fostering Social Worker to the Panel recommending that the Foster Carer/s are reverted, if appropriate, to a Lower Level of Fostering, or considered for Deregistration where the such evidence exists to support such a decision. The Fostering Panel will be asked to comment on whether appropriate expectations have been identified, support and guidance given and suitable timescales used. The Panel will then support / or disagree with the Fostering Supervising Social Worker recommendation. The recommendation of the Panel will then be presented to the Agency Decision Maker who will make the final decision.A blank Contract Action Plan is at Appendix 2 to this Schedule.**4.5 Annual Review**All Foster Carers will be required to undertake an annual performance assessment. |
| **5. Transitional Placements** |
| Foster Carers which suitable experience, qualifications and training will be identified as potential placements that specifically support children and young people through ‘transitions’.There are currently children and young people being ‘looked after’ within Residential Provisions. Research is clear that the outcomes for children and young people cared for within fostering families are better, for example in terms of educational attainment, and developing and maintaining relationships than for young people who grow up within residential establishments.Torbay Foster Care Service is therefore seeking to support a number of young people, aged 8 to 18 to move from Residential Care into Foster Care. Currently approved foster carers are welcome to express an interest in undertaking this work. Specific recruitment will also be undertaken to identify suitably skilled individuals / families who are able to help young people ‘bridge’ back to family life. Transitional periods will be planned and progressed on a case by case basis. The transitional phase is likely to be between one and three months. Allowances for undertaking this work will vary but are likely to be half the Level 3 Fostering Allowance, with additional payments potentially made to cover expenses incurred through visiting young people to build a relationship, whilst they remain in Residential Care. Transitions will be gentle with young people, spending days out, overnights, and weekends with their new Foster Carers prior to their final move. The pace of this process can be increased or decreased depending on how the young person is coping with the process. |

**APPENDIX ONE TO SCHEDULE 2B**

**FOSTER LEVELS REQUIREMETS – SUMMARY TABLE**



**£224**

**APPENDIX TWO TO SCHEDULE 2B**

**Contracts Action Plan (CAP)**

**Name of Foster Carer(s): Name**

**Name of Officer(s): Name** – (Position) – Torbay Council

**Recipients:**

**Date of Plan:**

**Objective:** To improve the areas detailed to a satisfactory level of performance and to ensure compliance in accordance to the Torbay Council overarching Agreement between both parties

 Progress Key:

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|  | For Action  |  | In progress |  | Completed |

| **Improvement Area** | **Action** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Due Date** | **Completed Date** |
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| **Progress Monitoring and updates** | **How** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Contingency** |
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**Additional Improvements Required**

| **Improvement** **Area** | **Tell us about anything else you are doing or intending to do to make improvements within your service.** | **Person(s)****Responsible** | **Due Date** | **Completed Date** |
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**Appendix 1 Review Meeting - Date**

| **Improvement Area** | **Action(s) to be taken** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Due Date** | **Progress Update / Completion Date** |
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**Appendix 2 Review Meeting – Date**

|  **Discussion / Actions and/or Improvements Reviewed** | **Aims and Objectives – Agreed Actions and / or Improvements to be taken** | **Person(s) Responsible** | **Due Date** | **Progress Update/Action Completed Date** |
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**Authorisation and Agreement**

**Signed on behalf of Torbay Council:**

**Print Name:**   **Designation:**  **Date:**

**Amanda White Specialist Service Manager 1st May 2016**

 **(Authority’s Authorised Officer)**

**Signed on behalf of the Foster Carer(s):**

Print Name:  **Designation:**  **Date:**

**Please Note**: If agreed please print, sign and return to: **Returnee Address**