



POSTERING OFFICER'S REVIEW OF BOARDING OUT ALLOWANCES.

As agreed by the Children's Sub-Committee I have, with the valuable assistance of co-opted Committee Members Dr. Milner and Mrs. Marett, made a detailed study of the allowances paid to Foster Parents.

The original allowances at the commencement of the Children's Office were based on a comparison to several mainland authorities. Since 1959 the National Foster Care Association (N.F.C.A.) has grown in stature, it advises relevant English Government Ministers and produces annual statistics and recommendation.

The N.F.C.A. has produced recommended Boarding Out Allowances for 1988. We compared our present allowances and discovered that for children under 11 years we compared well. There was a significant difference for those children over 15 years.

Jersey does not necessarily follow recommended allowances for the mainland unless there is a solid and perceived reason for doing so.

Our brief was to fully review allowances paying specific attention to payments for holidays, birthdays and Christmas.

We agreed that a comparison with the N.F.C.A. rates was justified for the following reasons. Those recommendations are based on a very detailed annual survey of Family Expenditure contained in the Employment Gazette produced by the Department of Employment. This survey gives details of costs of Childrens clothing, food etc., for each age group. To check on how valid this was to the Jersey situation I made contact with the Economic Advisers Office. I later confirmed my enquiry in writing and received a reply, both letters are attached. I was informed that the Employment Gazette is a reliable source of information which is used by the Economic Advisers Office for statistics. Jersey compares with a provincial area in England, costs of clothing and furniture are roughly comparable. However, food is between eight - ten per cent higher; childrens clothing also costs more in Jersey.

N.F.C.A. rates therefore have a sound basis. I am aware that many authorities accepted them in total, and that recently Guernsey has done so. The recommended rates indicate a growing awareness of the increasing costs of caring for growing children and that there is a substantial difference between the costs relating to children below ten years and those over 15 years still in full-time Education.

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Current rates in Jersey.

1988 N.F.C.A. Recommendations.

Age: 0 - 4 £34.86 weekly.
5 - 10 £39.97 weekly.
11 - 15 £45.57 weekly.
16 - 18 (20) £48.58 weekly.

Age: 0 - 4 £30.52 (2.34) *
5 - 7 £35.63 (2.74) *
8 - 10 £39.06 (3.00) *
11 - 12 £42.42 (3.26) *
13 - 15 £45.85 (3.52) *
16 - 18 £61.11 (4.70) *

Note:

* N.F.C.A. rates do not include their recommended payments for holidays, birthdays and Christmas, x 2 Boarding Out, x 1 Boarding Out, x 1 Boarding Out respectively, a total of four additional weeks. The weekly equivalent is shown in brackets.

Having had a son in full-time education to the age of 18 years I can well appreciate the annual costs involved, looking simply at a weekly amount is we consider misleading. Foster Parents are at the very least as generous towards any Foster Child in their care as to their own children. They maintain children in the care of the Education Committee to a high standard.

It was concluded that an increase in Boarding Out appears to be justified for those above the age of 15 years. For those aged 15 years an increase of £3.00 per week, and for those 16 and over still in full-time Education an additional £12.00 per week. These increases would only apply to children in long-term care. It was appreciated that £12.00 is a significant increase, and that it would be sensible to see this as a two step increase. It is suggested that an initial increase of £8.00 per week be made from January 1st, 1989, with a review after twelve months.

With regard to a Birthday and Holiday allowance we considered that a recommendation should be made on both. For Birthdays £25.00, which although less than the N.F.C.A. recommendation is the same sum that we pay towards Christmas. For Holidays we accepted the N.F.C.A. recommendation as being appropriate; that is twice the Boarding Out rate for the Fostered Child. This would only apply to children in long-term Foster Care being taken on holiday out of Jersey, and obviously only towards the one holiday during the year.

I must as Fostering Officer thank Dr. Milner and Mrs. Marett for their assistance in gathering details and then considering them in the preparation of this Report. Both were able to discuss the cost and problems of Fostering with active and experienced Foster Parents.

I have also attached details of the cost of the recommendations if accepted and based on the currently fostered children. In referring to my original memorandum to the Sub-Committee we agreed that Fostering in most cases is a better form of Care for children.