



ADVANCED PUBLICATION OF REPORTS

This publication gives five clear working days' notice of the decisions listed below.

These decisions are due to be signed by individual Cabinet Members and operational key decision makers.

Once signed all decisions will be published on the Council's Publication of Decisions List.

- 1. LOFT CONVERSION AND HOME EXTENSION POLICY FOR FOSTER CARERS (Pages 1 - 40)**

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London Borough of Enfield**Portfolio Decision of Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Protection****Subject:** Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for Foster Carers**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Mahtab Uddin**Executive Director:** Tony Theodoulou, Executive Director of People**Key Decision:** KD5202**Purpose of Report**

1. This report seeks a Cabinet Portfolio Decision on a new Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers.

Proposal(s)

2. It is proposed that the new Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for Foster Carers is approved by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder and adopted by Enfield Council.

Reason for Proposal(s)

3. On 3 February 2021, Enfield's Fostering Service received approval from Cabinet for use of up to £270k in 21/22 and £210k per year from 22/23 to 2029/30 as part of the Council's 10-year Capital Finance Programme (Key Decision 5202), to support foster carers to extend their homes to take on an additional placement.
4. This budget is referred to in the new Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers as the "Additional Bedroom Grant". The purpose of the scheme is to support a limited number of foster carers each year, to extend their homes to increase the number of bedrooms, in order to provide an additional placement to a looked after child or young person in Enfield. In turn, reducing the need, wherever possible, to approach costly independent fostering agencies.
5. This policy sets out the framework to ensure the "Additional Bedroom Grant" can be effectively implemented, over the lifecycle of the scheme.

Relevance to the Council Plan

6. The Council constantly strives to enhance the support that our looked after children and young people receive. This is crucial to supporting **safe, healthy and confident communities** throughout the borough.
7. The Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers will also assist the Council in its objective to be a **Modern Council**, which **targets resources smartly**, by providing a framework to ensure the Additional Bedroom Grant can be effectively implemented. Therefore, supporting the Fostering Service to maximise its internal resources, by reducing the need to commission costly independent fostering agencies, wherever possible.
8. Finally, through this initiative we will be supporting **good homes** in the borough, through increasing the size of several foster carers' homes each year for the duration of the scheme. This will enable them to provide an additional placement to a looked after child or young person in Enfield.

Background

9. While we do everything that we can to support families to care for their children within their own family networks, sometimes this is not possible, and children and young people need to become looked after. As a Corporate Parent, we have a duty to provide our looked after children and young people with good quality foster placements, where their overall needs will be met.
10. The local authority has seen an increase in the number of children in care, which means a heavier demand being placed on the Council to provide suitable foster placements. Due to this demand, it is often necessary to commission external agencies to provide placements for our children and young people, which adds to the financial pressure faced by the Council. The average cost of placing a child with an independent fostering agency carer is £800 per week, and the average cost of placing a child with an Enfield Council approved foster family is £400 per week.
11. As a result, a budget of £1.740m was approved by Cabinet in February 2021, as part of an invest to save initiative. The funding will be available as part of the Council's 10-Year Capital Programme between 2020/21 to 2029/30 and will provide around 3-4 existing foster carers each year the opportunity to extend their homes. This extended space in our existing foster carers' homes will result in additional placements being made available for our children and young people at the point when placements are requested. This will result in significant savings to the Council.
12. The initiative and supporting budget were approved at Cabinet in February 2021. Prior to this, foster carers who were identified as owner-occupiers were contacted by their fostering Supervising Social Worker to explore initial interest in the scheme. This early communication was carried out in December 2020 and 11 foster carers expressed their interest. Further consultation on the draft policy was not required.
13. In order to effectively implement this scheme, the Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers has been developed.

Main Considerations for the Council

14. The new Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers sets out a detailed framework to ensure the “Additional Bedroom Grant” can be effectively implemented, over the lifecycle of the scheme.

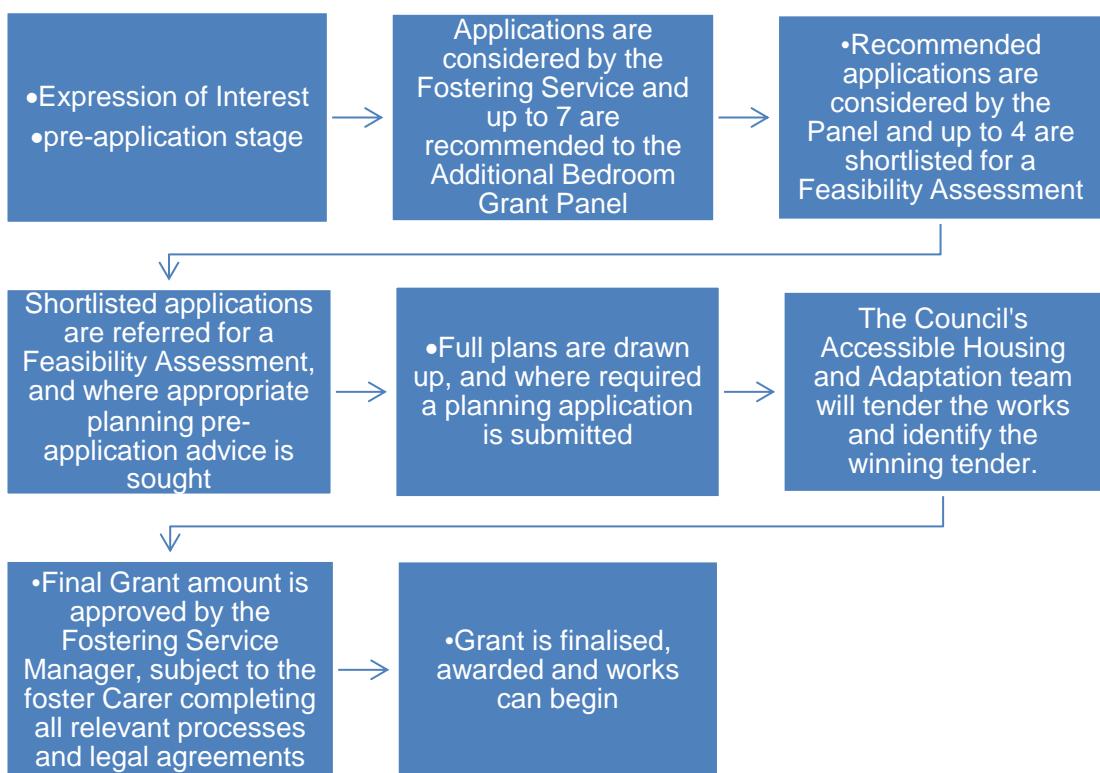
- **Eligibility and application process**

15. The policy establishes a clear eligibility criterion, which includes a requirement to be an approved Enfield Council foster carer; and a commitment to consistently provide an additional fostering placement for a minimum of 5 years. Furthermore, foster carers are required to be the owner-occupier of their home (please see page 3 of policy for the full eligibility criteria).

16. The policy sets out a fair and transparent application and award process, which puts the needs of looked after children and young people in Enfield at its heart.

17. As part of this process, a newly established Additional Bedroom Grant Panel will be responsible for shortlisting the applicants ahead of a Council appointed Feasibility Assessment at the foster carer’s home. The purpose of the visit is to: assess the feasibility of gaining an additional bedroom at the property; what options might exist; and to provide a provisional estimate of costs based on initial drawings.

18. An overview of the application and award process is detailed below:



- **Grant Award and Conditions:**

19. A grant will only be awarded once a foster carer has successfully advanced through all stages of the application process and all relevant checks and legal agreements have been completed. The Council will release the funds directly to the contractors and other professionals at the necessary stages.

20. The policy provides a clear outline of the grant's conditions and uses, to ensure the Council responsibly safeguards the funds invested and achieves the intended placement outcomes for our looked after children and young people.

- **Internal Grant Management**

21. Enfield Council's Accessible Housing and Adaptations Team are responsible for internal project management and delivery of the Additional Bedroom Grant, on behalf of Enfield's Fostering Service. This includes:

- Commissioning professionals and contractors to deliver all stages of the works in full, in compliance with the Council's [Contract Procedure Rules \(CPRs\)](#), financial regulations and relevant Council policies.
- Identifying the tender(s) providing the best value for money, ensuring works are delivered within the agreed budget and specification.
- Working with the foster carer to ensure they are kept up to date and are included in decision making (where appropriate).
- Ensuring all invoices and payments are appropriately managed.

22. The Accessible Housing and Adaptations Team have been identified, due to their expertise and experience in successfully delivering grant management within the context of building adaptations, extensions or conversions. The service charges a fee of 10% of the total cost of the works per scheme, which will be included in the final grant amount. Utilising an internal grant and project management approach, helps the Council to mitigate potential financial and reputational risk, by ensuring each building scheme is delivered as efficiently as possible, and to the required standards.

- **Engagement**

23. The Loft Conversion and Home extension Policy for foster carers has been developed with the expert advice of relevant services in the Council. This includes Procurement Services; Housing & Regeneration (Accessible Housing and Adaptations Team), Planning Services (including Strategic Planning and Design, and Building Control); Legal Services; and Finance.

24. In addition to this engagement, the Corporate Strategy Service has also attended the Fostering and Permanence Service Meeting to gain vital feedback to enhance the draft policy.

- **Key indicators of success:**

25. The key indicators of success for Enfield's Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers are as follows:

- The Council has successfully increased the capacity of between 2-4 foster families per year and they are providing at least one additional foster placement each.
- Foster families who are awarded the grant, continue to provide high standards of care and an additional placement(s) for at least 5 years (from the start date of the additional placement, made possible by an Additional Bedroom Grant).
- The Council has reduced its use of independent fostering agencies and increased the number of looked after children and young people who are placed with our existing foster families in the borough.

Safeguarding Implications

26. The new Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers will operate in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and safeguarding practices.
27. Foster carers wishing to apply for the grant must first complete the Pre-Application stage, where their eligibility for the Loft Conversion and Home Extension Scheme and their suitability to take on an additional placement is discussed with their Supervising Social Worker. Before a formal application is submitted for the grant, the Fostering Service Manager will also ensure the Grant Eligibility Criteria are met and will decide on the foster carer's suitability to take on an additional placement, in accordance with the Change of Approval Process.
28. Under the Grant Eligibility Criteria, foster carers wishing to apply for the Additional Bedroom Grant must be approved to foster by Enfield Council's Fostering Panel; and have at least 1-year of post approval experience caring for an Enfield looked after child or young person with no safeguarding or standard of care issues.
29. Furthermore, the Loft Conversion and Home Extension Scheme for foster carers operates in accordance with the usual fostering limit, set under [Schedule 7 of the Children Act 1989](#). This means foster carers that already have 3 bedrooms available in their homes for placements, will not be eligible to apply for the grant.
30. The Council has committed to the Co-operative Party's Charter Against Modern Slavery. The policy states that the Council will only work with suppliers who ensure it can meet the commitments of this charter.

Public Health Implications

31. With the introduction of this policy, Enfield Council can support more children and young people to live and thrive within the care of our approved foster carers, and we can more effectively deliver the essential service of protecting and supporting vulnerable children and young people within Enfield. This is

an essential part of our work to support safe, healthy and confident communities throughout the borough.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

32. The new Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers applies to all foster carers, and the Additional Bedroom Grant is open to all foster carers that meet the grant eligibility criteria and suitability to take on an additional placement, regardless of their protected characteristics.
33. A detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been developed alongside the new policy, in order to assess its impact on each protected characteristic, and the socio-economic impact of the policy. Where necessary the mitigating actions, are detailed. Please see appendix 2.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

34. The Council is committed to a carbon neutral Enfield by 2040. Where applicable works are undertaken as part of this scheme, these will need to meet the relevant Building Regulations and planning policies in respect of energy efficiency and sustainability; and where possible, opportunities will be explored through the design and building specifications to enhance the energy efficiency and sustainability of the spaces, whilst also being mindful of potential opportunities to support future proofing.
35. This Policy will ensure the Additional Bedroom Grant can be effectively implemented. In turn, this will support the Council to provide placements locally to our looked after children and young people. In doing so, they will be able to continue to attend local schools and health services, within the locality of their placement.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

36. The Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers provides a framework for the effective implementation of the Additional Bedroom grant budget. This policy is required by the Council in order to draft up the relevant legal agreements needed to implement the scheme.
37. If the decision is not taken to approve and adopt the policy, the scheme cannot be implemented. As a result, the anticipated savings will not be achieved, adding to the financial pressure faced by the Council at this time.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

38. **Grant Management:** To mitigate potential financial and reputational risk, the Council will utilise an internal grant and project management approach. This will ensure each building scheme is delivered as efficiently as possible, and to the required standards. The Accessible Housing and Adaptations Team have been identified as the most appropriate team to provide this service, due to their existing expertise and experience in successfully delivering grant

management within the context of building adaptations, extensions or conversions.

39. **Property suitability:** It is possible that a foster carer's property may not be suitable for an additional bedroom to be constructed. To help mitigate this risk, the Council will arrange for a Feasibility Assessment to be carried out at the homes of shortlisted foster carers. The purpose of this visit will be to assess the feasibility of gaining an additional bedroom at the property; what options might exist; and to provide a provisional estimate of costs based on initial drawings. Where appropriate, the Council will also arrange for a professional to seek planning pre-application advice on behalf of the foster carer. This process is carried out before the grant is awarded.
40. **Grant conditions:** There is a financial risk faced by the Council if a foster carer withdraws from the process after the award of the grant, or if a foster carer is deregistered or no longer able to provide the ongoing additional placement within their family during the 5-year commitment. To mitigate the financial risks faced by the Council, foster carers will be required to repay the Additional Bedroom Grant in full, if they withdraw at any point from the award of the grant and within 1 year from the start of the additional placement; or on a decreasing scale if they are deregistered (as a result of resignation or Fostering Service decision); or are no longer able to provide the ongoing additional placement within their family, over the five year commitment period. As set out in the policy, foster carers are required to enter into the relevant legal agreements in order to receive the grant. This includes agreeing to a legal charge being placed on the property for the duration of the 5-year commitment, commencing at the point the grant is awarded. To ensure foster carers fully understand the conditions of the legal charge, they are required to seek independent legal advice. This will be reimbursed up to the cost of £300+VAT. Details relating to the grant conditions and repayment (should this be required) can be found on pages 10-11 of the policy.

Financial Implications

41. **Budget & Funding** -This scheme is requesting £270,000 for 2021-22 and is fully funded from borrowing. The purpose of the scheme is to support a number of Foster Carers to extend their homes and increase the number of bedrooms in order to provide additional placement provision to a child or young person.
42. **Revenue** – In delivering this scheme there will be a reduction in financial costs and need to approach costly independent fostering agencies.
43. **Debt** – There is no additional impact on debt.
44. **Taxation** – No VAT issues.

Legal Implications

45. The Council is required as a best value authority under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous

improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

46. The Council also has a general power of competence under section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals may do, provided it is not prohibited by legislation. This includes, pursuant to section 1(4):
 - (a) power to do it anywhere in the United Kingdom or elsewhere,
 - (b) power to do it for a commercial purpose or otherwise for a charge, or without charge, and
 - (c) power to do it for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area.
47. A local authority may exercise the general power of competence for its own purpose, for a commercial purpose and/or for the benefit of others. The Council, moreover, has power under s.111 Local Government Act 1972 to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions (which would include childcare functions). The recommendation within this report is in accordance with these powers.
48. The functions of the local authorities in relation to children who are 'looked after' are set out in the Children Act 1989 and associated regulations and guidance. Section 22(3) of the Children Act 1989 sets out the general duty of the local authority looking after a child to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. Section 22A imposes a duty on the responsible authority when a child is in their care to provide the child with accommodation.
49. When considering the applications, the Council must have regard to Schedule 7 Children Act 1989 provision relating to the usual fostering limit, including any exemptions, such as when the children concerned are all siblings with respect to each other.
50. Public law principles will apply to the decisions made by the Council, including the Council's duty to take account of its fiduciary duty and to act prudently with public monies entrusted to it. The Council is also under a general duty to act reasonably and show that its decisions are made after having given due and proper consideration to all relevant factors. In this respect, it is noted that the Council will follow the Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers, so as to guide the applications process and to ensure a consistent approach is followed, thereby ensuring transparency and fairness in decision making. Furthermore, the moneys agreed for each grant will need to be protected via agreement with the legal owners and a charge placed on the legal title of each property, so as to ensure the debt to the Council is secured.
51. The Council has power to provide assistance as regards living accommodation, pursuant to Article 3 of The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (the 2002 Order). This includes power under section (1) (b) to adapt or improve living accommodation (whether by alteration, conversion or enlargement, by the installation of any thing or injection of any substance, or otherwise).

52. Article 3 of the 2002 Order stipulates that assistance may be in any form and may be unconditional, or subject to conditions and security. Furthermore, it prescribes various conditions in exercising the power, including pursuant to section (5) to –
- (a) give to that person a statement in writing of the conditions (if any) to which the assistance is to be subject; and
 - (b) satisfy themselves that that person has received appropriate advice or information about the extent and nature of any obligation (whether financial or otherwise) to which he will become subject in consequence of the provision of assistance.

53. Articles 4 and 5 of the 2002 Order stipulate additional conditions that the Council will need to adhere to in respect of the proposed grants. These requirements are as follows:

Article 4 - A local housing authority may not exercise the power conferred by article 3 in any case unless—

- (a) they have adopted a policy for the provision of assistance under that article;
- (b) they have given public notice of the adoption of the policy;
- (c) they have secured that—
 - (i) a document in which the policy is set out in full is available for inspection, free of charge, at their principal office at all reasonable times; and
 - (ii) copies of a document containing a summary of the policy may be obtained by post (on payment, where a reasonable charge is made, of the amount of the charge); and
- (d) the power is exercised in that case in accordance with that policy.

Article 5 – (1) A local housing authority may not provide assistance for a purpose specified in article 3(1)(b), (c) or (d) unless they are satisfied that the owner of the living accommodation concerned has consented to the carrying out of the assisted work.

54. Prior to start of works, checks will be needed with the Local Planning Authority as regards the need for planning approval (or whether permitted development rights can be relied upon, under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015), as amended, plus necessary consents organised pursuant to the Building Regulations 2010 and the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.

55. The Council has a general duty under section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act) to have due regard, in the exercise of its functions, to the need to:

- (i) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- (ii) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- (iii) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

56. The procurement of works and professional services should be carried out in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) and the Council's obligations relating to the obtaining of best value under the Local Government (Best Value Principles) Act (1999).

57. The Council must further ensure that all legal agreements entered into in consequence of the approval of the proposals set out in this report must be approved by Legal Services on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance.

(Legal Implications provided by EM and EP based on the version of the report circulated on 03/09/2021 14:29)

Workforce Implications

58. There are no workforce implications within this report.

Property Implications

59. There are no property implications within this report.

Other Implications

60. None

Options Considered

61. One other option was considered for the procurement of contractors. Under this option, foster carers would be required to identify contractors and seek out 3 quotes. This option presented greater risks both to the Council and our foster carers. Subsequently, the decision was made to internally project manage the delivery of the grants and the procurement of contractors. In doing so, the Council can better ensure projects are completed efficiently, within budget and to the required specification. Therefore, minimising potential financial and reputation risk to the Council, and importantly making the process as straightforward as possible for our foster families.

Conclusions

62. The new Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers enables the Council to effectively implement its scheme to increase the number of high-quality placement opportunities in the homes of our existing foster families, through the creation of additional bedrooms. This in turn will reduce the need to commission costly independent fostering agencies, wherever possible, resulting in a significant saving to the Council.

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Date of report: 3 September 2021

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for Foster Carers
- Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

- The Council's 10-Year Capital Programme Monitor Period 8 (November) 2020 report can be found [here](#)

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Enfield Council's Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for Foster Carers 2021-30

Document Control

Scope	<p>This policy sets out a framework to support the effective implementation of the discretionary “Additional Bedroom Grant”, under the Loft Conversion and Home Extension Scheme for foster carers. This is a 9-year scheme and the Grant is applicable to foster carers who meet the Grant Eligibility Criteria set out in this policy.</p> <p>The Additional Bedroom Grant supports a limited number of foster carers each year, to increase the number of bedrooms in their homes, in order to provide an additional placement to a looked after child or young person in Enfield. In turn, the Council will reduce the need, wherever possible, to approach costly independent fostering agencies.</p> <p>The Additional Bedroom Grant is open for application from all foster carers who meet the Grant Eligibility Criteria and additional placement suitability. However annual funding for this scheme is finite, and therefore, only a limited number of foster carers can be awarded the grant each year.</p> <p>The grant is subject to a series of conditions set out in this policy and accompanying legal agreements, and award will be overseen by a newly established Additional Bedroom Grant Panel.</p>
Approved by	APPROVAL PENDING: Cllr Mahtab Uddin, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Protection
Approval date	TBC
Document Author	Corporate Strategy Service
Review	This policy will be periodically reviewed and, when necessary, updated to respond to local and national change.

Introduction

Enfield Council is committed to delivering a lifetime of opportunity to everyone in the borough, and we constantly strive to enhance the support that our looked after children and young people receive, to promote their welfare and increase the opportunities available to them. While we do everything that we can to support families to care for their children within their own family networks, sometimes this is not possible, and children and young people need to become looked after. As a Corporate Parent, we have a duty to provide our looked after children and young people with good quality foster placements, where their overall needs will be met.

This policy outlines how Enfield Council will implement its Loft Conversion and Home Extension Scheme for foster carers, through the award of a discretionary “Additional Bedroom Grant”. The purpose of this grant is to increase the number of placement opportunities in the homes of our existing foster families, through the creation of additional bedrooms.

With the introduction of this scheme and policy, Enfield Council’s foster carers can support more children and young people to live and thrive within their care, and we can more effectively deliver the essential service of protecting and supporting vulnerable children and young people within Enfield. The Loft Conversion and Home Extension Scheme for foster carers is another step forward in supporting safe, healthy and confident communities throughout the borough.

What is the Additional Bedroom Grant?

The Additional Bedroom Grant supports a limited number of foster carers each year, to extend the number of bedrooms in their homes, in order to provide an additional placement(s) to looked after children or young people in Enfield. In turn, the Council will reduce the need, wherever possible, to approach costly independent fostering agencies.

The Additional Bedroom Grant is open for application from all foster carers who meet the Grant Eligibility Criteria. However annual funding for this scheme is finite, and therefore, only a limited number of foster carers can be awarded the grant each year. If a foster carer’s application is unsuccessful, the Council welcome their re-application over the course of the 9-year scheme, providing they still meet the Grant Eligibility Criteria and additional placement suitability.

The award of the grant is overseen by the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel. The Panel will make their decision based on a fair and transparent assessment that places the needs of our looked after children and young people at its heart. If a foster carer is awarded the grant, this will be subject to the conditions set out in this policy and the accompanying legal agreements.

Who is this policy for?

This policy is for foster carers approved by the London Borough of Enfield, who would like to provide another fostering placement, but require an additional bedroom to be built at their property, to enable them to do so. To be eligible to apply for the Additional Bedroom Grant, all conditions must be met within the criteria below.

Grant Eligibility Criteria

Foster carers must:

1. Be approved as a foster carer by Enfield Council;
2. Have at least 1-year of post approval experience caring for an Enfield looked after child or young person with no safeguarding or standard of care issues;
3. Remain a foster carer approved by Enfield, for a minimum of 5 years, from the start date of the additional placement made possible by the grant;
4. Be consistently available to accept and provide an additional ongoing placement within their family, for at least 5 years from the start date of the additional placement, made possible by an Additional Bedroom Grant.
5. Be owner-occupiers of the property they live in and have consent from all Title Holders of the property to apply for Additional Bedroom Grant.

The Additional Bedroom Grant is not suitable for:

- Foster carers living in private sector rented accommodation or a home where they are not the owner-occupiers.
- Foster carers wishing to provide sharing siblings (already living with the Foster carer) with a bedroom each. The Additional Bedroom Grant is strictly to meet the needs of an additional placement for a child or young person who is looked after in Enfield.
- Foster carers that do not intend to remain approved by the London Borough of Enfield for at least 5 years, from the start date of the additional placement, made possible by an Additional Bedroom Grant.
- Foster carers that will not be consistently available to accept and provide an additional ongoing placement within their family, for at least 5 years from the start date of the additional placement, made possible by an Additional Bedroom Grant.
- Foster carers that already have 3 bedrooms available in their homes for placements. The Loft Conversion and Home Extension Scheme for foster carers operates in accordance with the usual fostering limit, set under [Schedule 7 of the Children Act 1989](#).

Enfield Council's Loft Conversion and Extension process for foster carers

Pre-application

Once a year, the Council will invite foster carers to submit an “expression of interest” form, to let the Council know they are interested in the opportunity to apply for an Additional Bedroom Grant, under the Loft Conversion and Extension Scheme for foster carers.

Before submitting an expression of interest, foster carers must meet with their Supervising Social Worker to discuss the Grant Eligibility Criteria and their suitability to take on an additional placement(s). An expression of interest can be submitted by any foster carer who meets the Grant Eligibility Criteria. The completed form should be submitted by the foster carer via email/ post to their Supervising Social Worker by the deadline provided.

Once the Supervising Social Worker is satisfied a foster carer has met the Grant Eligibility Criteria and suitability, they will notify the Fostering Service Manager. The Fostering Service Manager must ensure the Grant Eligibility Criteria is met and will decide on the foster carer’s suitability to take on an additional placement, in accordance with the Change of Approval Process. If satisfied, the foster carer will be invited to make a formal grant application under the Loft Conversion and Extension Scheme for foster carers.

Application

A copy of the application form will be sent to foster carers by their Supervising Social Worker, once they have successfully completed the pre-application stage. If foster carers require a copy of the application form in an alternative format, they should inform their Supervising Social Worker.

Only Additional Bedroom Grant Applications submitted through the formal Application Process and by the deadline, will be considered.

At the time of application, foster carers will be informed by Enfield Council, of any information or evidence that they must submit in support of their application.

Applications are considered by the Fostering Service

Applications and supporting information submitted by the deadline, will firstly be considered and by a team of three Officers from Enfield Council’s Fostering Service. The Fostering Service will consider the applications based on a fair, appropriate and transparent evaluation and scoring process, taking into consideration:

- The Eligibility Criteria;
- A foster carer's suitability to take on an additional placement;
- The needs of looked after children and young people at that time;
- The placement priorities of the Fostering Service.

The 7 highest scoring applications will be recommended to the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel for their consideration. In some instances, the Fostering Service may decide to recommend less than 7 applications to the Panel. This decision is at the discretion of the Fostering Service and may be based on the scheme's Eligibility Criteria; a foster carer's suitability to take on an additional placement; the needs of looked after children and young people at that time; and the placement priorities of the Fostering Service.

Officers responsible for considering applications:

- Fostering Service Manager
- Fostering Team Manager
- A Supervising Social Worker

Due to the availability of Officers and service demands, this list may be subject to change.

Recommended applications are considered by the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel

Following this step, the Fostering Service Manager will convene the first meeting of the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel. The Panel will review the applications and scores, to decide a shortlist of up to 4 foster carers. This decision is at the discretion of the Panel and will be based on a fair, appropriate and transparent evaluation and scoring process, taking into consideration:

- The scores awarded by the Fostering Service and their recommendations, in relation to placement priorities at that time and additional placement suitability;
- The Grant Eligibility Criteria, application and supporting information.

Foster carers will be kept up to date on the progress of their application and will be notified of decisions within **14 business days** of the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel meeting.

Enfield Council Members of the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel:

- Head of Services for Looked After Children and Vulnerable Young People (**Chair**) (Voting Member)
- Fostering Service Manager (Voting Member)

- Accessible Housing and Adaptation Manager (Accessible Housing and Adaptations Team) (Voting Member)
- Fostering Team Manager (Advisory Member)

Shortlisted applications are referred for a Feasibility Assessment

If a foster carer's application for an Additional Bedroom Grant is shortlisted, Enfield Council will arrange for a qualified professional(s) to carry out a Feasibility Assessment at the foster carer's home. The purpose of the visit is to: assess the feasibility of gaining an additional bedroom at the property; what options might exist; and to provide a provisional estimate of costs based on initial drawings. Where appropriate, a Council appointed professional will seek planning pre-application advice on behalf of the foster carer.

If a foster carer's application advances to the Feasibility Assessment stage, this does not guarantee that they will be awarded the Additional Bedroom Grant, this decision remains at the discretion of the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel.

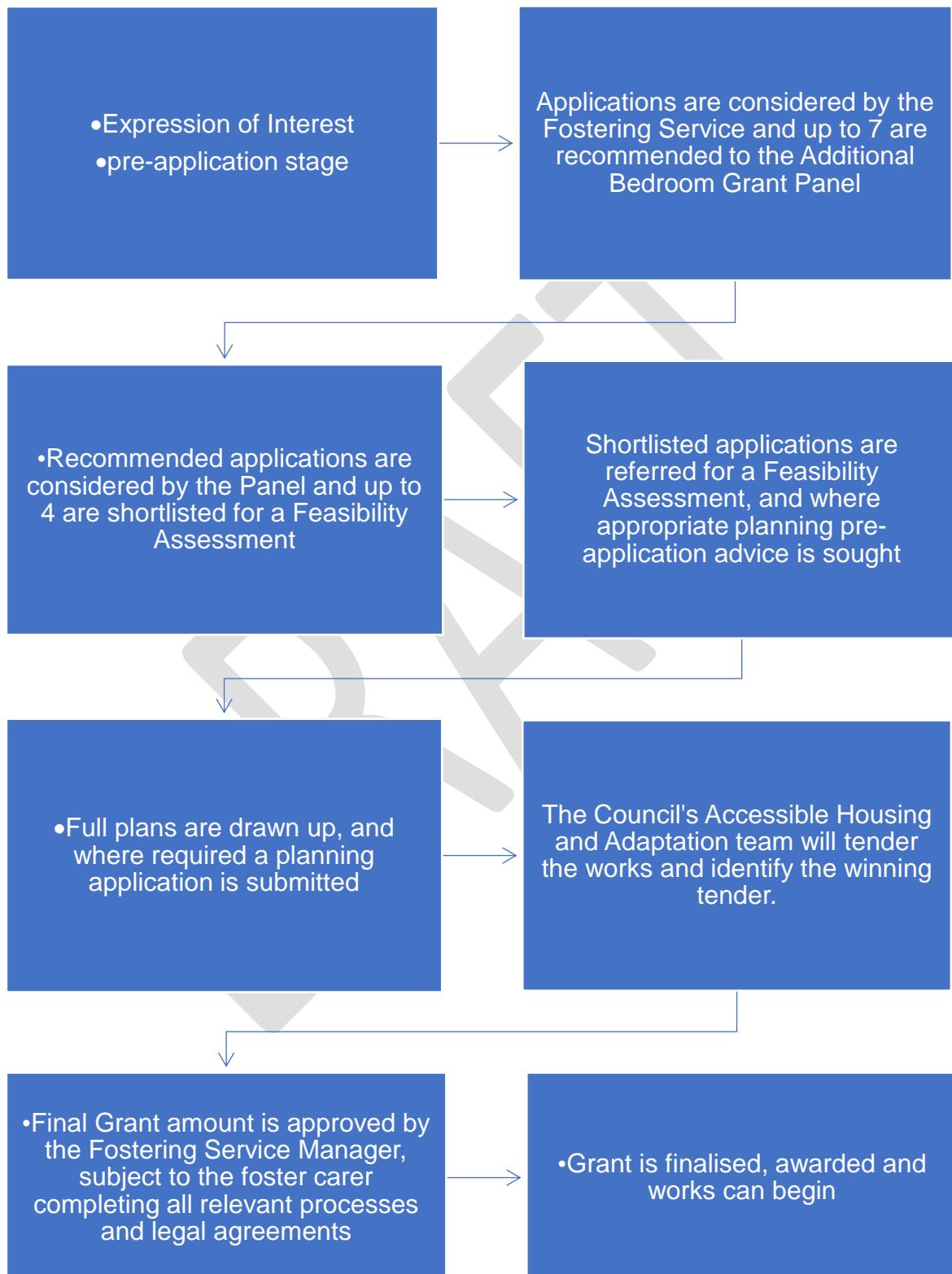
Next steps following the Feasibly Assessment

The Fostering Service Manager will convene the second meeting the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel, to review the findings and recommendations of the Feasibility Assessment. In complex cases, the Panel may invite advisory members to join the Panel from other relevant services in the Councils. If required, it is at the discretion of the Panel to revisit the applications recommended by the Fostering Service, to seek further Feasibility Assessments.

Following a satisfactory Feasibility Assessment, the Council will arrange for the full plans to be drawn up. The Council will work closely with foster carers during this process.

Where required, a planning application will also be submitted on behalf of the foster carer. Planning applications submitted on behalf of the those participating in the Loft Conversion and Home Extension Scheme for foster carers, will not receive guaranteed or fast track planning permission. As with a range of home improvements, works proposed and carried out under this scheme, will be subject to the London Borough of [Enfield's planning application processes](#) and building regulations.

Once the necessary permissions are in place, the Council's Accessible Housing and Adaptation Team will tender the works.

An overview of the Additional Bedroom Grant award process:

Grant Funding

Award of the Grant

A grant will only be awarded once a foster carer has successfully advanced through all stages of the application process and all relevant checks and legal agreements have been completed. The Council will release the funds directly to the contractors and other professionals at the necessary stages.

The grant will only cover the cost of “eligible works”. These are works agreed by the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel under the recommended scheme. Works and associated fees, which exceed the cost and scope of those agreed under the recommended scheme are known as “non-eligible” works. The Council will always look for the best value for money scheme, which meets the needs for their looked after children and young people.

The grant will include the agreed costs of:

- A standardised loft conversion, home extension, or adaptation (such as a partition wall) that results in one additional bedroom for the property, including build and labour;
- Standardised fixtures and fittings, decoration and soft furnishings to an amount set by the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel;
- Fees associated with the Feasibility Assessment;
- Fees associated with extension/ property design work; drawings and supporting information; Certificate of Lawful Development; Planning Application fees; Building Regulations; structural calculations; Thames Water cross over; schedule of works; and other relevant professional fees deemed necessary by the Council.
- An internal grant management fee of 10% of the total cost of the works per scheme (for services carried out by Enfield Council’s Accessible Housing and Adaptation team);
- The cost of Enfield Council’s Planning Pre-application Advice Service, and subsequent design changes/ additional supporting information in response to planning officer feedback.
- The cost of independent legal advice (up to a total of £300+VAT).

The grant will not cover the cost of:

- Additional, upgraded or bespoke design and building works, fixtures and fittings, decoration or furnishings that exceed the cost and scope of the recommended scheme agreed by the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel;

- Works in other areas of the foster carers home that are unrelated to the recommended scheme;
- An additional bathroom for the property, unless the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel is advised by the Supervising Social Worker that a bathroom is necessary to ensure the needs of the child or young person are appropriately supported;
- Further additional bedrooms (beyond the one standard bedroom). This would only be considered by the Additional Bedroom Panel under circumstances where a foster carer is willing and suitable to take on a further placement(s). The usual fostering limit, cost and property suitability would still need to be assessed as part of any decision by the Panel;
- Professional fees associated with non-eligible works;
- Appeal of planning decision, if permission is refused.

Upgrading the scheme (non-eligible works)

If the foster carer would like to upgrade any elements of the additional bedroom scheme they must do so at their own expense. In this instance, the foster carer must notify and seek approval from the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel in writing, before the legal agreements are finalised. The foster carers will be asked by the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel to submit evidence to show that they have enough funds to cover the cost of the upgraded (non-eligible) works in full.

If the upgraded (non-eligible) works are approved by the Additional Bedroom Grant Panel, the contractor tendered to deliver the work, will be asked to itemise the cost of the upgraded (non-eligible) works as part of their quotation. The foster carer will be required to pay the total cost for upgraded (non-eligible) works into a Council holding account before the works start. Depending on the nature of the upgraded (non-eligible) works, foster carers may also be asked to pay a refundable contingency sum.

The role of the Council in the scheme

Enfield Council's Accessible Housing and Adaptations Team are responsible for internal project management and delivery of the Additional Bedroom Grant, on behalf of the Enfield's Fostering Service. Full contact details for the Accessible Housing and Adaptations Team and the Council's responsibilities can be found in the Grant Agreement.

The Council's responsibilities include:

- Commissioning professionals and contractors to deliver all stages of the works in full, in compliance with the Council's [Contract Procedure Rules \(CPRs\)](#), financial regulations and relevant Council policies.

- Identifying the tender(s) providing the best value for money, ensuring works are delivered within the agreed budget and specification.
- Working with the foster carer to ensure they are kept up to date and are included in decision making (where appropriate).
- Ensuring all invoices and payments are appropriately managed.

Grant conditions and repayment

A legal charge will be placed on the foster carer's property, commencing at the point the grant is awarded and to the total amount awarded. At the end of the 5-year commitment period the Council can remove the legal charge from the property at the request of the foster carer.

Foster carers are required to repay the Additional Bedroom Grant in full or in part, if they are deregistered or are no longer able to provide the ongoing additional placement within their family, for 5 years. The expectation is that the foster carer is consistently available to accept and provide the ongoing additional placement for a period of 5 years. The 5-year commitment to providing the additional placement, will commence on the first day of the placement made possible by the Additional Bedroom Grant. Deregistration occurs when a foster carer resigns, or the Fostering Service decides they are no longer suitable to foster. This decision will be made via a Fostering Panel and ADM process or an internal ADM process by the Fostering Service Manager.

If the foster carer withdraws at any point from the award of the grant and within 1 year from the start of the additional placement, they are required to repay 100% of the funds.

Timeframe	Repayment Percentage of total grant awarded
Award of Grant and within 1 year from the start of the additional placement	100% repayable
Within 2 years	80% repayable
Within 3 years	60% repayable
Within 4 years	40% repayable
Within 5 years	20% repayable
There are no obligations for repayments after the 5-year commitment is met and the legal charge can be removed at the foster carers request	

Where repayment is required, a repayment plan will be agreed between the foster carer and Enfield Council, with the option to repay in instalments within the specified timeframes below:

Circumstance	Repayment
The property is sold, and the foster	No repayment required

carer continues to provide the additional placement in their new home (for at least 5 years from the start date of the additional placement, made possible by an Additional Bedroom Grant).	
The property is sold, and the foster carer is no longer able to commit to providing an additional placement (for at least 5 years from the start date of the additional placement, made possible by an Additional Bedroom Grant).	Repayment required. Option to repay in 2 instalments within 3 months of the property sale.
A foster carer is deregistered or is no longer able to provide an additional ongoing placement within their family (for at least 5 years from the start date of the additional placement, made possible by an Additional Bedroom Grant).	Repayment required. Option to repay in up to 12 instalments within a 12-month period from the date they deregister or the additional placement ends.
In exceptional circumstances <u>and</u> at Enfield Council's absolute discretion the requirement to repay may be waived.	

Contacts, Agreements and Independent Advice

Legal agreements

If a foster carer is awarded the Additional Bedroom Grant, they will be required to enter into the relevant legal agreements.

Enfield Council require foster carers to seek independent legal advice, before signing the legal agreements associated with this scheme, from a Solicitor authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

The Council will agree to cover the cost of independent legal advice up to a total of £300+VAT. The invoice will be paid by the Council directly to the Solicitor. For information and advice on instructing a Solicitor authorised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority please click [here](#) to visit the website of the Law Society.

Insurance and mortgage agreements

It is the responsibility of the foster carer to notify their insurance companies of the works and to ensure that their buildings and contents insurance policies provide adequate cover for the duration of the works. It is the responsibility of the foster carer to cover any additional insurance premium or administrative costs incurred.

Foster carers will be required to check their mortgage arrangements and obtain any permissions necessary from their lender or any other interested parties, including permission to carry out the building works at the property and to place a legal charge on the register.

After the works are complete

Use of the additional bedroom(s) or bathroom (where applicable)

The purpose of the Additional Bedroom Grant is to create an extra bedroom within the property, to enable a foster carer to provide an additional placement to a looked after child or young person. However, this extra bedroom(s) (or bathroom where applicable) may be used by another member of the Foster Family (and an existing bedroom/ bathroom reallocated), on the advice and agreement of the Supervising Social Worker. The Supervising Social Worker will work together with each Foster family, to support them to determine the most appropriate living arrangements within the property, to ensure the individual needs of all looked after children or young people living in the property are met in full.

If an existing bedroom in the property is reallocated to a looked after child or young person, the foster carer will be expected to cover the costs associated with making sure the bedroom is fit-for-purpose, decorated and furnished to the expected standard set by Enfield's Fostering Service. The Supervising Social Worker will undertake a visit to the placement to ensure the necessary standards have been met.

Measuring our success and review of this policy

The key indicators of success for Enfield's Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers are as follows:

- The Council has successfully increased the capacity of between 2-4 Foster Families per year and they are providing at least one additional foster placement each.
- Foster Families who are awarded the grant, continue to provide high standards of care and an additional placement(s) for at least 5 years (from the start date of the additional placement, made possible by an Additional Bedroom Grant).
- The Council has reduced its use of independent fostering agencies and increased the number of looked after children and young people who are placed with our existing foster families in the borough.

This policy will be periodically reviewed by Enfield Council and, when necessary, updated to respond to local and national change.

Enfield Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Introduction

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to help Enfield Council make sure it does not discriminate against service users, residents and staff, and that we promote equality where possible. Completing the assessment is a way to make sure everyone involved in a decision or activity thinks carefully about the likely impact of their work and that we take appropriate action in response to this analysis.

The EqIA provides a way to systematically assess and record the likely equality impact of an activity, policy, strategy, budget change or any other decision.

The assessment helps us to focus on the impact on people who share one of the different nine protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 as well as on people who are disadvantaged due to socio-economic factors. The assessment involves anticipating the consequences of the activity or decision on different groups of people and making sure that:

- unlawful discrimination is eliminated
- opportunities for advancing equal opportunities are maximised
- opportunities for fostering good relations are maximised.

The EqIA is carried out by completing this form. To complete it you will need to:

- use local or national research which relates to how the activity/ policy/ strategy/ budget change or decision being made may impact on different people in different ways based on their protected characteristic or socioeconomic status;
- where possible, analyse any equality data we have on the people in Enfield who will be affected eg equality data on service users and/or equality data on the Enfield population;
- refer to the engagement and/ or consultation you have carried out with stakeholders, including the community and/or voluntary and community sector groups you consulted and their views. Consider what this engagement showed us about the likely impact of the activity/ policy/ strategy/ budget change or decision on different groups.

The results of the EqIA should be used to inform the proposal/ recommended decision and changes should be made to the proposal/ recommended decision as a result of the assessment where required. Any ongoing/ future mitigating actions required should be set out in the action plan at the end of the assessment.

The completed EqIA should be included as an appendix to relevant EMT/ Delegated Authority/ Cabinet/ Council reports regarding the service activity/ policy/ strategy/ budget change/ decision. Decision-makers should be confident that a robust EqIA has taken place, that any necessary mitigating action has been taken and that there are robust arrangements in place to ensure any necessary ongoing actions are delivered.

SECTION 1 – Equality Analysis Details

Title of service activity / policy/ strategy/ budget change/ decision that you are assessing	Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for Foster Carers
Lead officer(s) name(s) and contact details	Victoria Adnan, Strategy and Policy Manager, Corporate Strategy Service Victoria.adnan@enfield.gov.uk Debbie Michael, Service Manager, Fostering & Permanence Debbie.Michael@enfield.gov.uk
Team/ Department	Fostering & Permanence
Executive Director	Tony Theodoulou
Cabinet Member	Cllr Mahtab Uddin
Date of EqIA completion	26 August 2021

SECTION 2 – Summary of Proposal

Please give a brief summary of the proposed service change / policy/ strategy/ budget change/project plan/ key decision

Please summarise briefly:

What is the proposed decision or change?

What are the reasons for the decision or change?

What outcomes are you hoping to achieve from this change?

Who will be impacted by the project or change - staff, service users, or the wider community?

Proposed decision:

A new Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for Foster carers is due to be presented to Cllr Mahtab Uddin, (Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Education and Protection) for approval in late August/ September 2021.

Subject to successful approval, this Policy will then be adopted by Enfield Council, with implementation due to commence as soon as possible in 2021. This Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out to assess the differential impact of the Policy in relation to each protected characteristic.

Reason for the decision and intended outcomes:

On 3 February 2021, Enfield's Fostering Service received approval from Cabinet for use of up to £270k in 21/22 and £210k per year from 22/23 to 2029/30, as part of an invest to save Council initiative.

The budget will be used to provide an “Additional Bedroom Grant” to a limited number of Foster carers each year. This will enable them to extend their homes, to provide an additional placement to a looked after child or young person in Enfield. The Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for Foster carers provides the framework to ensure the Additional Bedroom Grant can be effectively implemented.

The intended outcomes for Enfield's Loft Conversion and Home Extension Policy for foster carers are as follows:

- The Council will successfully increase the capacity of between 2-4 foster families per year and they will provide at least one additional foster placement each.
- Foster families who are awarded the grant will continue to provide high standards of care and an additional placement(s) for at least 5 years (from the date of the first additional placement, made possible by an Additional

Bedroom Grant).

- The Council will reduce its use of costly independent fostering agencies and increase the number of looked after children and young people that are placed with our existing foster families in the borough.

Who will this decision impact?

This Policy will have an impact on foster carers that are eligible to apply for the Additional Bedroom Grant, and Enfield children and young people that are looked after by foster carers. A child or young person is looked after, when they have been in the care of Enfield Council for more than 24 hours.

Grant Eligibility Criteria:

Foster carers must:

1. Be approved as a foster carer by Enfield Council;
2. Have at least 1-year of post approval experience caring for an Enfield Looked after Child or Young Person with no safeguarding or standard of care issues;
3. Remain a foster carer approved by Enfield, for a minimum of five years, from the start date of the additional placement made possible by the grant;
4. Be consistently available to accept and provide an additional ongoing placement within their family, for at least 5 years from the start date of the additional placement, made possible by an Additional Bedroom Grant.
5. Be owner-occupiers of the property they live in and have consent from all Title Holders of the property to apply for Additional Bedroom Grant.

Additional Information

The Policy sets out the grant conditions (please see page 10-11 of policy), which state that foster carers are required to repay the Additional Bedroom Grant in full or in part, if they are deregistered or are no longer able to provide the ongoing additional placement within their family, for five years. The expectation is that the foster carer is consistently available to accept and provide the ongoing additional placement for a period of 5 years. The five-year commitment to providing the additional placement, will commence on the first day of the placement made possible by the Additional Bedroom Grant. Deregistration occurs when a foster carer resigns, or the Fostering Service decides they are no longer suitable to foster. This decision will be made via a Fostering Panel and ADM process or an internal ADM process by the Fostering Service Manager. The length of the commitment, which is set at 5 years, has been based on benchmarking of 4 local

authorities with similar schemes.

If the foster carer withdraws at any point from the award of the grant and within 1 year from the start of the additional placement, they are required to repay 100% of the funds.

As set out in the policy, foster carers are required to enter into the relevant legal agreements in order to receive the grant. This includes the foster carer agreeing to a legal charge being placed on their property, at the point the grant is awarded and to the total amount awarded. At the end of the 5-year commitment period the Council can remove the legal charge from the property at the request of the foster carer.

To ensure foster carers fully understand the conditions of the legal charge, they are required to seek independent legal advice. This will be reimbursed up to the cost of £300+VAT. Details relating to the grant conditions and repayment (should this be required) can be found on pages 10-11 of the policy.

SECTION 3 – Equality Analysis

This section asks you to consider the potential differential impact of the proposed decision or change on different protected characteristics, and what mitigating actions should be taken to avoid or counteract any negative impact.

According to the Equality Act 2010, protected characteristics are aspects of a person's identity that make them who they are. The law defines 9 protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment.
4. Marriage and civil partnership.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.
6. Race
7. Religion or belief.
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation.

At Enfield Council, we also consider socio-economic status as an additional characteristic.

“Differential impact” means that people of a particular protected characteristic (eg people of a particular age, people with a disability, people of a particular gender, or

people from a particular race and religion) will be significantly more affected by the change than other groups. Please consider both potential positive and negative impacts, and, where possible, provide evidence to explain why this group might be particularly affected. If there is no differential impact for that group, briefly explain why this is not applicable.

Please consider how the proposed change will affect staff, service users or members of the wider community who share one of the following protected characteristics.

Age

This can refer to people of a specific age e.g. 18-year olds, or age range e.g. 0-18 year olds.

Will the proposed change to service/policy/budget have a **differential impact [positive or negative]** on people of a specific age or age group (e.g. older or younger people)?

Please provide evidence to explain why this group may be particularly affected.

The Policy applies to all foster carers, and the Additional Bedroom Grant is open to all foster carers that meet the grant eligibility criteria and suitability to take on an additional placement.

There is no upper age limit for fostering in Enfield, however foster carers are required to be a minimum of 21 years of age in order to be eligible to Foster. As a result, foster carers will be over the age of 21 years when applying for the Additional Bedroom Grant. Regardless of their age, all foster carers that express interest in the grant will be supported by their Supervising Social Worker, to consider their family circumstances and suitability to take on an additional fostering placement before applying.

This assessment recognises that only foster carers who are Owner-Occupiers will be eligible for the grant. This is a necessary policy decision, as the foster carer is required to agree to a Legal Charge being placed on their property. In the UK, the average age of a first-time buyer is around 34 years¹. At present, the average age of a foster carer in Enfield (with at least one placement) is 53 years old. As a result, the requirement to be an Owner-Occupier could negatively impact younger foster carers, that are less likely to own their homes. However, due to the average age of foster carers in the borough, it is anticipated that this impact is limited.

When considering the differential impact on children and young people, at present Enfield has a higher proportion of older looked after children and young people aged 10-

¹ [First-time buyer statistics: Average age to buy a house in the UK](#)

15 years and 16+ in care, when compared to other age groups. Children aged between 10–15 years, represent 37% of looked after children and young people and 27% are aged 16+. This is compared with 8% of looked after children and young people, aged between 0-1 years.

Children under the age of 3 years are not required to have their own room, providing the foster carer can comfortably fit a cot in their bedroom for the baby or young child to sleep in. It is therefore anticipated that children over the age of 3 are more likely to be placed with a family as a result of the Additional Bedroom Grant.

Furthermore, when applications are reviewed each year, the placement priorities of the Fostering Service and the needs of Children and young people at that time will be taken into consideration, alongside the Eligibility Criteria and a foster carer's suitability to take on an additional placement. Due to the higher rate of teenagers in care in the borough, it is probable that applicants that can provide a placement to an older looked after child or young person may be prioritised to some extent.

Mitigating actions to be taken

No further action required.

Disability

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

This could include:

Physical impairment, hearing impairment, visual impairment, learning difficulties, longstanding illness or health condition, mental illness, substance abuse or other impairments.

Will the proposed change to service/policy/budget have a differential impact [positive or negative] on people with disabilities?

Please provide evidence to explain why this group may be particularly affected.

The Policy applies to all foster carers, and the Additional Bedroom Grant is open to all foster carers that meet the grant eligibility criteria and suitability to take on an additional placement, regardless of whether they have a disability. Foster carers will be supported by their Supervising Social Worker, to consider whether their disability or a member of the household's disability would impact their ability to take on an additional fostering placement, before applying for the grant.

At present, 11% of looked after children and young people have a disability in Enfield, and where required Social Services will arrange for the necessary assessments to be

carried out, in line with Enfield's statutory duties. The required adaptations will be incorporated into the design, to ensure the identified needs of the child or young person are supported.

If existing member(s) of the household are disabled, Enfield Council's Accessible housing and Adaptations Team (who are responsible for internal project management and delivery of the Additional Bedroom Grant), will also work with the foster carer and their Supervising Social Worker to ensure their needs are supported during the building phase of the project.

Finally, once a building project is completed, a foster carer's Supervising Social Worker will work closely with their family to determine the most appropriate living arrangements for the household, once the new bedroom has been added to the property, to ensure the individual needs of the looked after children and young people in their care are supported and met.

Mitigating actions to be taken

- **Design phase** - Social Services will arrange for the necessary assessments; and required adaptations to be incorporated into the design.
- **Building phase** - Accessible housing and Adaptations Team to work with the foster carer and their Supervising Social Worker to ensure needs are supported.
- **Post-build phase** - Supervising Social Worker will work closely with their family to determine the most appropriate living arrangements for the household.
- **Grant Conditions:** In exceptional circumstances and at Enfield Council's absolute discretion the requirement to repay may be waived.

Gender Reassignment

This refers to people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

Will this change to service/policy/budget have a **differential impact [positive or negative]** on transgender people?

Please provide evidence to explain why this group may be particularly affected.

There is no impact anticipated.

The Policy applies to all foster carers, and the Additional Bedroom Grant is open to all foster carers that meet the grant eligibility criteria and suitability to take on an additional placement.

A foster family's Supervising Social Worker will work closely with their family to support

the individual needs of the looked after children and young people in their care.

Mitigating actions to be taken

No further action required.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Marriage and civil partnerships are different ways of legally recognising relationships. The formation of a civil partnership must remain secular, whereas a marriage can be conducted through either religious or civil ceremonies. In the U.K both marriages and civil partnerships can be same sex or mixed sex. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

Will this change to service/policy/budget have a **differential impact [positive or negative]** on people in a marriage or civil partnership?

Please provide evidence to explain why this group may be particularly affected

There is no impact anticipated.

The Policy applies to all foster carers, and the Additional Bedroom Grant is open to all foster carers that meet the grant eligibility criteria and suitability to take on an additional placement, regardless of their marital/ civil partnership status.

A foster family's Supervising Social Worker will work closely with the family to support the individual needs of the looked after children and young people in their care.

Mitigating actions to be taken

No further action required.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy refers to the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Will this change to service/policy/budget have a **differential impact [positive or negative]** on pregnancy and maternity?

Please provide evidence to explain why this group may be particularly affected

The Policy applies to all foster carers, and the Additional Bedroom Grant is open to all foster carers that meet the grant eligibility criteria and suitability to take on an additional placement, regardless of whether they are pregnant or expecting a baby. A foster carer's Supervising Social Worker will work closely with them, to support them to consider their family circumstances and suitability to take on an additional fostering placement before applying for the grant.

Should a foster carer be awarded the grant, they are expected to remain a foster carer approved by Enfield; and be consistently available to accept and provide an additional ongoing placement within their family for a minimum of five years, from the start date of the additional placement made possible by the grant. Should a foster carer no longer be able to consistently provide the additional placement within their family during the 5-year commitment, they would be subject to the repayment conditions outlined in the policy and associated legal agreements. In exceptional circumstances and at Enfield Council's absolute discretion the requirement to repay may be waived. This would be considered on a case by case basis.

Young parents sometimes need support to help raise their children and under these circumstances, Foster carers may provide a placement to care for both parent and child. As with all placements, the Supervising Social Worker will work closely with foster carer and their family to support the individual needs of the looked after children and young people in their care.

Mitigating actions to be taken

- In exceptional circumstances and at Enfield Council's absolute discretion the requirement to repay may be waived

Race

This refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Will this change to service/policy/budget have a **differential impact [positive or negative]** on people of a certain race?

Please provide evidence to explain why this group may be particularly affected

The Policy applies to all foster carers, and the Additional Bedroom Grant is open to all foster carers that meet the grant eligibility criteria and suitability to take on an additional placement, regardless of their race.

When considering the differential impact on people of a certain race. We know that

locally 46% of looked after children and young people are White, 34% are Black, 13% are from Mixed backgrounds or Multiple Ethnic Groups, and 4% are Asian.

Although children and young people entering into care are more likely to be White, it is not known at this time whether this policy will have a greater impact on children and young people of a certain race in the foster care system.

Mitigating actions to be taken

No further action required at this time. Retrospective EqIA following year 2 implementation is recommended.

Religion and belief

Religion refers to a person's faith (e.g. Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism). Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live.

Will this change to service/policy/budget have a **differential impact [positive or negative]** on people who follow a religion or belief, including lack of belief?

Please provide evidence to explain why this group may be particularly affected.

There is no impact anticipated.

The Policy applies to all foster carers, and the Additional Bedroom Grant is open to all foster carers that meet the grant eligibility criteria and suitability to take on an additional placement, regardless of their religion and belief.

A foster family's Supervising Social Worker will work closely with the family to support the individual needs of the looked after children and young people in their care.

Mitigating actions to be taken

No further action required.

Sex

Sex refers to whether you are a female or male.

Will this change to service/policy/budget have a **differential impact [positive or negative]** on females or males?

Please provide evidence to explain why this group may be particularly affected.

There is no impact anticipated.

The Policy applies to all foster carers, and the Additional Bedroom Grant is open to all foster carers that meet the grant eligibility criteria and suitability to take on an additional placement, regardless of their sex.

When considering the differential impact on male and female looked after children and young people, we know nationally that males are more likely to be looked after than females in England. As at 31 March 2020, 56% of looked after children and young people were male and 44% were female in England.² At present in Enfield, 54% of looked after children and young people are male and 46% are female.

Although children and young people entering into care are more likely to be male in Enfield, it is not known at this time whether this policy will have a greater impact on male children and young people in the foster care system.

Mitigating actions to be taken

No further action required at this time. A retrospective EqIA following year 2 implementation is recommended.

Sexual Orientation

This refers to whether a person is sexually attracted to people of the same sex or a different sex to themselves. Please consider the impact on people who identify as heterosexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, non-binary or asexual.

Will this change to service/policy/budget have a **differential impact [positive or negative]** on people with a particular sexual orientation?

Please provide evidence to explain why this group may be particularly affected.

² Children looked after in England including adoptions - [Characteristics of children looked after](#)

There is no impact anticipated.

The Policy applies to all foster carers, and the Additional Bedroom Grant is open to all foster carers that meet the grant eligibility criteria and suitability to take on an additional placement, regardless of their sexual orientation.

A foster family's Supervising Social Worker will work closely with the family to support the individual needs of the looked after children and young people in their care.

Mitigating actions to be taken

No further action required.

Socio-economic deprivation

This refers to people who are disadvantaged due to socio-economic factors e.g. unemployment, low income, low academic qualifications or living in a deprived area, social housing or unstable housing.

Will this change to service/policy/budget have a **differential impact [positive or negative]** on people who are socio-economically disadvantaged?

Please provide evidence to explain why this group may be particularly affected.

The Additional Bedroom Grant will support a limited number of foster carers each year, who would like to provide another fostering placement, but require an additional bedroom to be built at their property, to enable them to do so. Applying for the Additional Bedroom Grant is free, regardless of a foster carer's employment status and income, however Foster carers are required to be the Owner-Occupier of their home. This is a necessary policy decision, as the foster carer is required to be the Owner agree to a Legal Charge being placed on their property.

Foster carers must already be approved by Enfield to foster via a Fostering Panel and ADM process, and are required to work with their Supervising Social Worker to consider their family circumstances and suitability to take on an additional fostering placement before applying for the grant.

If a foster carer's application for an Additional Bedroom Grant is successful, the approved works (including costs for professional/service fees and decoration) will be funded in whole by Enfield Council as a non-repayable grant, subject to the conditions set out in the policy. To ensure foster carers understand the conditions of the grant, they are required by Enfield Council to seek independent legal advice before entering into the



relevant legal agreements. Enfield Council will agree to cover the cost of this advice up to £300+VAT. Exemption from the repayment condition due to exceptional circumstances, will be considered by the Council on a case by case basis.

The grant will not negatively impact on a foster family's universal eligibility to receive their Fostering Allowances that support the cost of caring for a child or young person.

Mitigating actions to be taken.

- In exceptional circumstances and at Enfield Council's absolute discretion the requirement to repay may be waived.

SECTION 4 – Monitoring and Review

How do you intend to monitor and review the effects of this proposal?

Who will be responsible for assessing the effects of this proposal?

The policy will be periodically reviewed by Enfield Council and, when necessary, updated to respond to local and national change. Due to the length of the scheme, it is recommended that the Fostering Service complete a retrospective EqIA following the completion of the second year of implementation, to evaluate the delivery phase of the scheme and the subsequent impact of the policy.

SECTION 5 – Action Plan for Mitigating Actions.

Identified Issue	Action Required	Lead officer	Timescale/By When	Costs	Review Date/Comments