

Public Document Pack

North Yorkshire Council Children and Young People's Service - Executive Members & Corporate Director Meetings

Tuesday, 5 March 2024 / 1.00 pm

A G E N D A

1 **Apologies for Absence**

2 **Declarations of Interest**

Items for Executive Member decision

Items for Corporate Director decision

- 3 Music Service fees (Pages 3 - 12) (Pages 3 - 12)

To seek approval for the scale of fees for parents and schools for financial year 2024/25 and for changes to the Terms and Conditions for the Music Service

- 4 Recommendations re 2024/2025 Payment Rates for NYC Foster Carers (Pages 13 - 16) (Pages 13 - 16)

To agree the increase in Payment Rates for NYC Foster Carers (including Family & Friends Foster Carers, Short Break and Specialist Short Break Carers and Staying Put arrangements) for the 2024/2025 Financial Year.

Any Other Business

- 5 Date of future formal meetings

Circulation:

Executive Members

Janet Sanderson
Annabel Wilkinson

Officer attendees

Stuart Carlton
Howard Emmett
M Sadler
L Cowley

Presenting Officers

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NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

5 March 2024

COUNTY MUSIC SERVICE FEES 2024/25

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the scale of fees for parents and schools for financial year 2024/25
- 1.2 To seek approval for changes to the Terms and Conditions for the Music Service

2.0 MUSIC CENTRE FEES TO PARENTS

- 2.1 The Music Service runs six Music Centres across the county and as part of the National Plan for Music Education, they fulfil a core role for the service. Music Centres provide opportunities for pupils to perform in ensembles out of school time.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the Music Centre fees increase by 8% from April 2024, to cover the rising costs of the teaching staff and venue hire.
- 2.3 Terms and conditions for Music Centres are to change, to match with the introduction of the new billing system in September.
- 2.4 The core offer of full/part morning will remain the same.

3.0 TUITION FEES FOR PARENTS

- 3.1 The introduction of a new billing system will necessitate a change of Terms and Conditions in September. Parents will be charged up front and will pay for the actual number of lessons they are able to receive (traditionally lessons falling on Mondays have meant parents receive less due to bank holidays and school training days).
- 3.2 The service currently guarantees the offer of 28 lessons per term. The fee paid covers the 28 lessons. If pupils received more e.g. 31 or 32 lessons, these were effectively free.
- 3.3 In September, those receiving more than 28 lessons will be paying the extra amount. This may seem as though lesson costs have gone up significantly.

3.4 **Table showing potential increase in fees to parents based on 2023/24 fees**

Potential lessons	number of	Cost for a group lesson (per term) based on column 1	Increase per term
28		£80	0
29		£82.80	£2.80
30		£85.70	£5.70
31		£88.50	£8.50
32		£91.40	£11.40

Potential lessons	number of	Cost for an individual lesson (per term) based on column 1	Increase per term
28		£156.30	0
29		£161.80	£5.30
30		£167.40	£11.10 (recommended capped rate)
31		£173.00	£16.70 (if implemented)
32		£178.50	£22.20 (if implemented)

* Most pupils will receive 30 lessons per term.

3.5 **Table showing the increase in annual income**

Based on current tuition numbers of	Number of lessons	Potential Increase in annual income if all had this number of lessons
Individual 20 Minute	29	£13,244
	30	£27,738
	31	£41,733
	32	£55,477
Group lessons	29	£5636
	30	£11,474
	31	£17,110
	32	£22,948

Expected Average increase in revenue of between = £18K - £39K (if individual rate capped at 30 lessons)

- 3.6 The perception from parents could be that lesson prices are increasing dramatically. The reality is that they will be getting charged per lesson, instead of benefitting from having free extra lessons. However, if this is combined with an inflationary increase, the effect could see some parents leaving the service.
- 3.7 The individual lesson rate, if not capped, will be too high, coming in at over £50 per hour. This is considerably more than the private sector and what you might expect to pay for lessons at a conservatoire. The individual rate needs to be reduced or capped.

3.8 The new charges cannot be implemented until the new system goes live in September 2024.

3.9 FEES OPTION

3.10 Group lessons should be charged as per the table above (3.2)

3.11 To keep fees in line with the market we should cap the increase at 30 lessons (i.e. increase of £11.10 per term). This would make the hourly rate £47, which although still high, keeps the service in touch with the private sector. It represents an increase of 7% based on the current fee covering 32 lessons.

4.0 REMISSIONS

4.1 The table below shows the total number of remissions we are currently delivering.

REMISSIONS	Autumn Term 2023	
Standard Group	FSMs	258
Standard Group	Working Tax Credit (Grp Tuition 30%)	11
LAC (Group Tuition)		5
LAC Indiv20 - (LA funded)		10

4.2 The cost of providing free tuition to LAC and those on FSM is increasing. If numbers remain fixed in the spring or summer term, it will be costing the service approximately £69K subsidy. This is an increase of £12K on last year. Any further increases to FSM pupil numbers will result in a greater subsidy, putting extra pressure on the budget.

4.3 Provision of tuition for those that are financially less able to pay, is a key part of the National Plan for Music Education. To suspend this remission would make the service elitist and based on people ability to pay. It is proposed that we continue to offer the remission to FSM pupils for the following financial year and review the position in 2025, to assess its continued viability. The National Plan for Music states we should **“commit to achieving greater access and more opportunity in music education, identifying and removing barriers, including for children in low-income families and children with special educational needs and disabilities”**

5.0 PROPOSED CHANGES TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS

5.1 In order to facilitate the new billing system, which includes a requirement not to hold any debt outside of the main Oracle Financial system, it is proposed that the changes to terms and Conditions (appendix 1) be accepted for implementation in September.

6.0 FINANCIAL POSITION AND SAVINGS OPTIONS

- 6.1 The Music Service is expected to have an overspend of approximately £48K at the end of the financial year. The main reasons for this are un-funded pay awards for NJC, Teachers and Soulbury staff and an increase in remission costs for pupils on FSM and LAC. Other factors, including an increase in venue costs for music centres and a further reduction of £4K in grant funding from Arts Council England, have also contributed to the overspend.
- 6.2 The service has a number of options to reduce the deficit over the next two financial years, that are set out below.
- 6.3 As stated in 3.3, it is expected that the new billing system will generate an increase in revenue by up to £39K as a result of a change in terms and conditions, as the service moves to upfront payments. This will also eliminate the costs associated with bad debt (approximately £3K per year) and save approximately £40K in admin time, postage and other identifiables across the council. Please see appendix 2. Once the system is imbedded, the service will review our BSS support needs. It is expected that this could be reduced by 1 FTE of BSS support in financial year 2025/6. This would represent a saving to the service of approximately £20K – £25K.

Total Potential savings – Music Service = £28K; NYC = £12K

Total Increase in Income – Up to £39K

Overall Total = £79K (to be spread over next two financial years)

7.0 OTHER FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The increase to Teachers Pension contributions of 5% for those on Teachers Pay and Conditions has not currently been funded for centrally employed teachers. It is estimated that this would cost the service an extra £60K. Music Mark are currently lobbying for this to be funded for Music Hubs.
- 7.2 In April 2024, the service will learn if it has been successful in securing the new hub grant for both North Yorkshire and York. The service's grant funding will increase by approximately £220K although, this will need to be spent in York. The service will top slice off the grant to support our admin costs, as it will involve more management time. However, it will open up York as an area the service can trade in. This has previously been denied as hubs have not been allowed to trade across borders. Increased trading opportunities will allow the service to build back revenue to pre-covid levels, thus making the service more financially viable and avoiding the necessity to implement some of the options outlined above.

**COUNTY MUSIC SERVICE
FEES AND CHARGES - TERMLY**

Service	April 2023	September 2024 (dependant on number of lessons offered)
Tuition in a group	£80	£80 - £91.40
Individual tuition – 20 min	£156.30	£156.30 – £167.40
Group of two – 30 min	£156.30	£156.30 – £167.40 (capped at 30 lesson cost)
Individual tuition – 30 min	£219.50	£219.50 - £235.17 (capped at 30 lesson cost)
Instrument Hire		
Music Centre – 2 sessions (full morning)	£68.50	£74 (8% increase)
Music Centre – 1 session (part morning)	£54.90	£59.50 (8% increase)

Table Showing Remission Types

Category	Remission Award	Proposed Change
FSM	80% remission	No change. Review in 2025
Working Tax Credit	30% on standard group lesson	No change. Review in 2025

8.0 SCHOOL CHARGES

- 8.1 The Music Service, as part of its core delivery for the National Plan for Music, trades directly with schools.
- 8.2 Whole Class instrumental lessons no longer have to be subsidised but need to remain affordable to schools. The service has seen a reduction of school buy back this year due to the teachers’ pay award that caused some schools to cancel tuition they have been buying in for years.
- 8.3 Whole Class Tuition and continuation are key statistics when reporting back to Arts Council.
- 8.4 School engagement is now a main feature of the New National Plan so we need to make sure schools can afford to access tuition. .
- 8.5 The table below shows this year’s proposals for fee changes.
- 8.6 The service put fees up by 6% last year and combined with their own budgetary issues, we have seen less engagement with over 20 schools stopping tuition. For this reason, we are proposing freezing fees for schools to work on getting back our customer base.

Package	Pricing	2023/24 Price Primary and Secondary	2024/25 Proposed Price Primary and Secondary	% Increase
Cluster Group	Per hour	£50.00	£50.00	No change
Instrumental Teaching Block	Per hour	£52.80	£52.80	No change
Instruments Only	Per term	£163.20	£163.20	No change
Large Group Instrumental Ensemble Sessions	Per hour	£52.80	£52.80	No change
Whole Class Music Curriculum Sessions	Per hour	£52.80	£52.80	No change
Whole Class Instrumental NPME GCSE Tuition	Per Academic Year	£1168	£1168	No change
	Per Hour	£52.80	£52.80	No change

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that for the financial year 2024/25

- The proposal for the change in Music Centre fees of 8% be agreed
- That changes to fees and Terms and Conditions are actioned when the new system goes live in September 2024.
- That the savings plan set out in point 6 is adopted, with a further review of remissions in 2025.
- That school fees remain static so we can build back our custom base and support schools with the New National Plan for Music.

Report prepared by Ian Bangay, Head of County Music Service

Pupil Instrumental & Vocal Tuition - Parent/Guardian Terms & Conditions

Terms and Conditions upon which instrumental tuition is made available

1. Lessons will be offered over 32 weeks in line with the Music Teachers' teaching weeks calendar. These weeks are all within the NYC school terms.
2. Lessons will last for a minimum of twenty minutes and a maximum of thirty minutes.
3. Standard group tuition will be delivered in small groups of no more than 4 pupils.
4. Music lessons will generally take place during the normal school day.
5. Pupils will be expected to attend all instrumental lessons, which means leaving their school timetabled lessons.
6. Parents / Guardians are responsible for ensuring the Music Service has full and up-to-date contact details via the Music Portal.
7. Communication between the Music Service and parents, students and/or teachers will use the messaging facility within the Music Portal.
8. Payment
All payments for Music Service offerings are to be made through the Music Portal, e.g. lessons, instrument hire etc.
 - Start-up Payment - payment required in full in advance of lessons starting (no lessons will take place until payment is received)
 - Ongoing lessons – the following full term's fees must be paid before the end of term – e.g. pay by last school week in December to continue lessons next term, i.e. in January.
 - If no payment is received lessons will be stopped
 - If no payment is received and lessons have been stopped, the full term's payment will be charged to recommence lessons, if there is availability and the place has not been reallocated to another student.
9. Remission Scheme discounts:
Parents/Guardians who wish to apply for discounted music lessons for students under one of the schemes (detailed below) must upload supporting documentation to the portal **at the time the application is submitted** to allow it to be processed.
If the circumstances of the student change regarding their eligibility to remission scheme discounts then the charges will change and apply accordingly.
Please see Remissions information below for more details.
10. Credits for lessons will apply in the following circumstances only:-
 - Teacher absence
 - School Closure (online lessons may be offered as an alternative, if appropriate)
 - Long-term Pupil illness (i.e. if absent from school for two or more consecutive lessons and the absence is confirmed by school)

- Unable to attend scheduled lesson because of external exams
e.g. Year 6 (e.g. SATS), Year 11 (e.g. GCSE) & Year 13 (e.g. A-levels)

11. Stopping Tuition

In the event that a parent/guardian wishes to give notice that lessons are not to continue this must be received by the Music portal. Payment of fees will be required up to the end of the term in which the notice is received.

The Music Service request that a Lesson Termination form is completed if tuition is stopped to understand the reason for stopping lessons.

12. Attendance

The music service will keep a record of pupil attendance at lessons via the Music portal.

The attendance information is available to be viewed at any time via the portal.

If 3 consecutive lessons are missed by a pupil then an alert will be sent to the parent/guardian via the portal.

13. Unviable Groups

In the event your child is the only remaining child in a Standard Group lesson we will endeavour to recruit new pupils to fill the Group. If it is not possible to recruit others to the group, the individual lessons charge will apply after half a term. This 'top-up fee' is to be paid at time of agreement to continue as individual lessons.

The Music Service would consider offering online lessons as an alternative if an online group can be created. Pupils will also be given the option to stop having lessons under these circumstances with no notice payment due and any remaining lessons will be refunded/credited.

14. Having initially checked that an instrumental teacher is available and that the instrument is suitable for the pupils' needs, pupils may continue their lessons until further notice.

This is subject to the availability of the Authority and the Music Service to provide suitable tuition.

15. The Music Service has the right to withdraw lessons for reasons including, but not restricted to, a student's poor rate of progress, poor attendance, conduct etc.

16. Privacy Notice: The Music Service collects personal data in order to process music lesson application / registration and also to provide music tuition. For more detailed information on why the Council stores and processes your data please refer to the NYC privacy notice: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/privacy-notices>

Tuition Remission Schemes

1. Free School Meals

Eligibility to Free School Meals is determined by:

- Universal Credit with annual net earned income of no more than £7,400 (over 3 most recent assessment periods);
- Child Tax Credit with annual income below £16,190** (see below) as stated on Award letter and not receiving Working Tax Credit;
- Income Support;
- Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based JSA)*** (see below);
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Otherwise eligible for Free School Meals

Eligibility to Free School Meals entitles claimants, subject to **documentary proof of their entitlement**, to;

Standard Group Lessons

- learn one instrument in a Standard Group at no cost.
- tuition on any further instruments will be chargeable at the full rate applicable for such lessons at the time.

Individual 20 minute lessons

- can be made available to pupils in this category at nil cost who, in the opinion of their peripatetic instrumental teacher, have reached a playing standard equivalent to Associated Board Grade 6.
- one instrument per child

** £16,190 annual income value applicable from 6 April 2022

*** Job Seekers Allowance (Contribution Based) or Child Tax Credit with annual income over, does not confer eligibility for reduced fees.

2. Working Tax Credit

Eligibility to Working Tax Credit entitles claimants, subject to **documentary proof of their entitlement**, to;

Standard Group Lessons

- learn one instrument in a Standard Group at a discount of 30%.
- Tuition on any further instruments will be similarly chargeable at the full rate applicable for such lessons at the time.

Individual 20 minute lessons

- Individual 20 minute lessons can be made available to pupils in this category at 30% discount who, in the opinion of their peripatetic instrumental teacher, have reached a playing standard equivalent to Associated Board Grade 6.
- One instrument per child

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NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE
CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS
5 MARCH 2024

**FOSTERING NORTH YORKSHIRE SERVICE:
Recommendations re 2024/2025 Payment Rates for NYC Foster Carers**

This report

Requires a decision	✓	Seeks views	✓
Provides a briefing		Reports on performance	
Is presented in advance of an Executive Member decision			

The following implications are associated with this report:

Financial Resources	✓	Staff/HR	
Performance	✓	Community	
Legal	✓		

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the increase in Payment Rates for NYC Foster Carers (including Family & Friends Foster Carers, Short Break and Specialist Short Break Carers and Staying Put arrangements) for the 2024/2025 Financial Year. This will be for all Allowances, Premiums and Fees (including the Day Care rate) – with the exception of the original protected higher rate for Advanced Foster Carers (of £314.62 a week) that is being honoured for the duration of current placements from the introduction of the NYC Fostering Framework in April 2015 (only two placements now remain under this legacy arrangement).

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As an authority, NYC is a member of the national charity The Fostering Network. In the past, The Fostering Network published their recommended Payment Rates for Foster Carers and North Yorkshire had always adopted these rates and thus increases.
- 2.2 Primarily due to the increasing differentials in housing costs across the country, in 2016 The Fostering Network ceased recommending Payment Rates and instead issued the following guidance:

Allowances should be reviewed annually and adjusted to keep up with costs; at least the annual rate of inflation should be applied. Allowances should not be shaved as a result of the financial pressures affecting the majority of services.

2.3 The Fostering Network did not indicate which would be their recommended or preferred measure of inflation.

3.0 METHODOLOGY ESTABLISHED FOR THE 2016/2017 PAYMENT RATES AND RECOMMENDATION FOR 2024/2025 PAYMENT RATES

3.1 Following the guidance issued by The Fostering Network, in April 2016 North Yorkshire County Council (as it was then) increased fostering payments by the rate of CPI (Consumer Price Index) in December 2015 (which at the time was 0.2%).

3.2 The 2016/2017 methodology has been adopted every year since. In 2023/2024 there were also other additional payment increases: above inflation increase to the Accredited Foster Carer Premium, introduction of bridging payments for Accredited Foster Carers and payment to all Foster Carers of the first 100 miles of travel (that had previously been expected to be paid from the child's/young person's Allowance).

3.3 As such, the proposal for 2024/2025 Payment Rates is an increase by the rate of CPI in December 2023 – which was 4%.

3.4 Sufficient budget provision has been incorporated into the North Yorkshire Council MTFs (Medium Term Financial Strategy) to cover a 4% increase in Fostering payments..

3.5 Justification for utilising the December 2023 CPI rate of 4% is twofold:

- To use a month different to December 2023 to identify the rate of CPI to utilise for the 2024/2025 Payment Rates would differ from the now established and accepted practice in North Yorkshire
- To remain as competitive as possible with Independent Fostering Agencies and neighbouring authorities with respect to future recruitment and the Allowances, Premiums and Fees that North Yorkshire pays Foster Carers

4.0 DAY CARE RATE

4.1 The increase in the National Living Wage to £11.44 an hour in April 2024 means that the current Fostering North Yorkshire Day Care rate of £8.40 per hour (equivalent to £10.50 when not paying Income Tax and £10.92 with a 4% increase) could look out of step.

4.2 As most Foster Carers do not pay Income Tax on fostering income, a Day Care rate in line with the new National Living Wage is calculated without including the basic 20% rate of tax – thus be 80% of £11.44 at £9.15 per hour.

4.3 Increasing from £8.40 an hour to £9.15 (ie. an increase of £0.75) is more than a 4% increase (it is approximately 8.9%). On average, about 500 hours of Day Care a month take place (equating to 6,000 hours of Day Care a year).

- 4.4 An increase of £0.75 per hour would cost approximately an additional £4,500 a year. Nearly half of this additional cost will be covered by the proposed uplift of 4% for all payments.
- 4.5 In previous years, the remaining difference (for this year approximately £2.25K) has been absorbed by the Placement Budget and this is again the proposal for this 2024/2025 increase.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 For the 2024/2025 Payment Rates for NYC Foster Carers (including Family & Friends Foster Carers, Short Break and Specialist Short Break Carers and Staying Put arrangements) to be increased by 4% (in line with the December 2023 rate of CPI) of the 2023/2024 Payment Rates.
- 5.2 To increase the Day Care rate of £8.40 per hour to £9.15 per hour (to keep in line with 80% of the level of the National Living Wage being introduced in April 2024).

CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

Report prepared by Alan Tucker 13 February 2024

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