

Children and Young People's Service

Haringey Private Fostering Statement of Purpose 2021-2022



Private Fostering – Statement of Purpose 2021/22

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Statement of Purpose is a description of private fostering arrangements within the London Borough of Haringey. The **National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering, Standard 1**, requires that there is a clear description of and guide to the service for professionals, the public, Council members and external organisations.

1.2 This document defines what constitutes a private fostering arrangement; the requirement that the Local Authority is notified of all private fostering arrangements; the assessment process and the support and advice offered to parents, private foster carers and privately fostered children within Haringey.

2. PRINCIPLES OF THE SERVICE

2.1 The London Borough of Haringey Children's Services is committed to supporting the upbringing of children within and by their families of origin wherever possible, with the minimum of intrusion from the Local Authority. While Children's Services takes its responsibilities in relation to Private Fostering very seriously, it will seek to exercise those responsibilities in ways that are seen as supportive by children, parents and carers. It is not our intention to make judgements about or interfere in the arrangements that parents make for the care of their children, except where this is necessary to ensure that the welfare of the child is being adequately safeguarded.

2.2 It is our intention to work in partnership with children, carers and parents to ensure that:

- Children are provided with high quality childcare that meets their needs. We recognise that privately fostered children are a diverse and potentially vulnerable group. Our aim is to get it right for privately fostered children in Haringey and create a supportive culture where birth parents, others with parental responsibility and carers feel comfortable in notifying the Council of private fostering arrangements. We are committed to ensuring that the range of support available is sensitive to parents and carers with children who have special needs and disabilities and is available to all members of Haringey's diverse community.
- Safeguarding children and their best interests at all times are of paramount importance.

The private fostering service will work to ensure that the welfare of all privately fostered children is safeguarded and promoted so that they are able to achieve good outcomes.

- We work together to safeguard and promote children's physical, emotional, health, educational, social and cultural needs.
- Private foster carers are provided with advice, support and training which helps them to provide such care.
- Birth parents feel able to seek the help and guidance of the Local Authority. Wherever possible, the service will respect the wishes of parents in relation to the private fostering agreement and work in partnership with parents and private foster carers to maintain this agreement in a way that promotes the child's welfare.
- The service will ensure that Haringey's duties towards privately fostered children as set out in the Children Act 1989, the amendments contained within the Children's Act 2004 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 are fully discharged.
- Where necessary, Haringey will exercise its powers of this legislation to ensure the safety and welfare of privately fostered children, including use of child protection procedures and finding alternative accommodation for the child.
- The service will work to ensure that equal opportunities are incorporated into all aspects of service delivery and that all prospective private foster carers are assessed and supported on the basis of the needs of the individual private foster child regardless of race, religion, class, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.
- The service is committed to maintaining high standards in relation to private fostering service provision and to reviewing this on a continual basis in order to improve the quality of service delivery.
- The service will promote multi-agency partnership working in order to improve service delivery and outcomes for privately fostered children by keeping all agencies and private and voluntary groups fully informed and involved regarding service provision and development and making appropriate referrals to services on behalf of the privately fostered child.

2.3 Our aim is to ensure that we create a culture in Haringey where birth parents, individuals with parental responsibility and carers, feel comfortable in notifying the Local Authority of Private Fostering arrangements and that they are aware of the benefits to them and the children in their care of them doing so.

2.4 The service works to ensure that equal opportunities are integrated into all aspects of our service delivery. The welfare of the child will always remain paramount and in every circumstance.

2.5 Any comments or enquires regarding this Statement of Purpose should be passed to the Head of Service for Children in Care and Placements.

3. STRUCTURE OF HARINGEY'S PRIVATE FOSTERING SERVICE

3.1 The London Borough of Haringey has established clear policies and procedures on private fostering which set out how the authority discharges its duties in relation to the private fostering legislation and sits within Haringey's Fostering service.

3.2 The Private Fostering Service has two functions:

- To raise public and professionals' awareness about private fostering and, the requirements to notify the Local Authority of any actual or planned private fostering arrangements;
- To carry out the full assessment on the Carer, their household and accommodation and to provide support to the child and adults involved.

3.3 The Private Fostering service is delivered by a dedicated team consisting of a senior practitioner and is managed by the Fostering manager. Overall management lies with the Service Manager for Fostering and the team receives administrative support from the Fostering service administrators.

3.4 The Private Fostering Senior Practitioner receives regular supervision and there are clear arrangements in place for their continued supervision in the absence of a team manager. On day-to-day issues, the senior practitioner will deputise for the team manager whilst in their

absence, the supervising social worker can seek support and advice from the Head of Service or the Service Manager within the division.

Name	Designation
Bev Hendricks	Assistant Director of Children's Services Safeguarding & Social Care
Dennis Scotland	Head of Service for Children in Care and Placement
Sandy Bansil	Service Manager for Fostering and Permanency.
Anna Augustine and Deborah Sterling	Team Managers for Fostering Support Teams
Beverlin McKenzie	Senior Practitioner – Private Fostering

3.5 Haringey is committed to achieving high standards in relation to their private fostering provision. The private fostering senior practitioner is the designated person to who requests for advice and information about private fostering should be referred to. In the absence of the private fostering social worker, the Fostering Team Manager should be consulted.

4 LEGAL DEFINITION OF PRIVATLEY FOSTERED CHILD

4.1 In the definition provided by the Children Act 1989, a privately fostered child means:

A child, under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) who is cared for, or proposed to be cared for, and provided with accommodation by someone other than:

- A parent of his/hers;
- A person who is not a parent of his/hers but who has Parental Responsibility for him/her;
- A close relative of his/hers, i.e. a close relative **is** an aunt/uncle/stepparent/grandparent/sibling but **not** a cousin or great-aunt/uncle;
- And she/he has been cared for and accommodated by that person; for 28 days or more; or the period of actual private fostering is less than 28 days but the private foster career intends to privately foster him/her for a period of 28 days or more.

4.2 A child is **not** privately fostered if the person caring for him/her:

- Had done so for a period of less than 28 days;

- Does not intend to do so for any longer than 28 days.

4.3 For the purposes of the Act parent includes unmarried or putative father. A relative includes full-blood or half-blood relation, a relation by marriage, or step - parent.

4.4 Care arrangements that meet the above criteria are considered as private fostering arrangements whether or not there is any kind of payment, either monetary or in kind. A child who is **Looked After** by a Local Authority or placed in any residential home, hospital or school is excluded from the definition.

4.5 There is a wide variety of reasons why parents seek private foster care for their children. These may include:

- Children living apart from their families due to parental or family problems;
- Teenagers living with a friend, or friend's parent/carer, where relationships at home have broken down; or
- To complete a stage of education because of a family move
- Children whose parents are working abroad or in another part of the country or serving in the armed forces
- Children whose parents come into the country to study or work and find it difficult to care for their own children
- Children sent to the UK for educational purposes, including those attending language schools, foreign exchanges or sport academies who stay with host families
- Children attending residential schools who stay with a teacher, or a friend's parents during the long school holidays
- Unaccompanied minors who are living with friends, relatives or strangers.

5 HARINGEY'S DUTIES

5.1 As a local authority, Haringey has a duty to ensure that the welfare of children who are privately fostered living in the area is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted and that parents, private foster carers and privately fostered children receive any advice that they need about private fostering arrangements.

5.2 The duties of the Local Authority in relation to private fostering are set out in the Children Act 1989, the Children (Private Arrangement for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and amendments are contained within the Children Act 2004. The National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005 set out several standards to be met by all Local Authorities in discharging their duties which cover the following areas:

- Statement of Purpose;
- Notification;
- Safeguarding and promoting welfare;
- Advice and support;
- Monitoring and compliance.

This duty involves the following activities:

- Acting upon notifications
- Providing information and advice to parents, private foster carers and children around private fostering
- Assessing the suitability of the private foster carer's household and accommodation, and their capacity to care for the child
- Assessing the child's needs and ensuring that arrangements are in place to ensure that they receive universal services such as health and education
- Ensuring that adequate and clear arrangements are in place between the private foster carer and the child's parents covering such areas as contact, financial support, decision making, health care etc.
- Monitoring the welfare of the child through visits within specified time scales, ensuring that the child is seen alone, and producing written records of visits
- Providing such assessment and support as may be required under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 where the child is in need
- Providing private foster carers with advice and support on caring for the child
- Monitoring the discharge of its functions in respect of privately fostered children
- Raising public awareness of private fostering within the local area in order to strengthen the notification scheme
- Ensuring other professionals are aware of their duty to notify Haringey of any private fostering arrangement of which they become aware.

5.3 The Local Authority needs to ensure the above duties and functions are carried out.

Where the Local Authority has received notification under Regulation 3 (The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005) they must arrange for an officer of the Authority within seven working days to:

- Visit the premises where it is proposed that the child will be cared for and accommodated;
- Visit and speak to the proposed private foster carer and to all members of the household;
- Visit and speak to the privately fostered child alone unless the officer considers it inappropriate;
- Speak to and if it is practicable to do so, visit every parent or person with **Parental Responsibility** for the child; and
- Establish such matters listed in Schedule 2 (2005 Regulations as above) as appear to the officer to be relevant

Where notification is received about a child who is already being privately fostered the duties of the officer remain the same as in section 67(1) of The 1989 Act.

6 RAISING AWARENESS OF PRIVATE FOSTERING

6.1 Haringey uses a number of methods to raise awareness of Private Fostering issues with professionals and members of the community in order to help people understand when a child is privately fostered, the need to notify Haringey, and the Private Fostering service's role in assessing private fostering arrangements in order to safeguard the privately fostered child and promote their welfare.

6.2 To achieve this, Haringey has developed a marketing strategy to raise the awareness of private fostering within the following sectors:

- schools, nurseries and play centres
- libraries
- voluntary/community sector organisations
- council offices
- health clinics and GP surgeries

6.3 In addition, information about private fostering is disseminated across the borough in the following ways:

- Providing clear information and guidance about private fostering on the council's website.
- Producing information leaflets for key groups, and making sure they are available in the places parents, carers children and young people are likely to go, including:
 - Schools, nurseries and children's centres
 - Leisure centers and libraries
 - GP surgeries and health centres
 - Places of worship
 - Including features on private fostering in Haringey People which has a distribution of over 117,000 homes, readerships is on average 1.5 residents per household and it is sent to every household within the borough on a bi-monthly basis.
- A series of presentations have been delivered to schools across Haringey to raise the awareness of Private Fostering.
- Haringey will be launching a private fostering App for users to gain a better awareness of private fostering and to determine whether the criteria for private fostering is met.
- Information on private fostering is made widely available at co-ordinated events and functions planned throughout the year with partner agencies.
- Haringey has links with other inner London boroughs to share information and expertise and pool resources in order to raise awareness around private fostering issues throughout a number of boroughs.

6.4 Below are further strategies that will be employed as part of Haringey's 'Private Fostering Marketing Strategy' to reach Haringey's objective to increase awareness and involvement within households that have a private fostering arrangement in place:

- **Online / Website**

We know that the website continues to be the chosen channel for customers to obtain supporting information before contacting the department. We will to continue update the private fostering pages on the Haringey website and update following the launch of the new Private Fostering App.

- **Press advertising**

Adverts in local papers/magazines placed at key times to create a media interest. E.g. Haringey People, In Haringey.

- **Social Media**

Social media will play a huge part in this year's strategy, this will include using different social platforms, i.e. Twitter and Facebook. The council's Facebook and Twitter platforms allow for regular online communication and is an efficient way of creating a sense of community with the residents of Haringey. It allows us to have an interactive and interesting way of communicating our messages.

- **Brand awareness**

All promotional materials display the private fostering brand to build and maintain strong brand awareness.

- **Places of worship**

North London has a very active religious community, with regular groups being set up. This gives the team an opportunity to raise awareness of private fostering within faith groups.

- **Community places**

Distributing posters and leaflets at schools, nurseries and children's centres, leisure centers and libraries, GP surgeries and health centres and places of worship.

- **Word of Mouth (WOM)**

WOM has been the most successful strategy for the private fostering team and will continue to be pushed with existing carers via carer events, promoted in the newsletter and raised with HFCA to also promote.

- **Reporting**

Tracking - It is necessary to record all data on all applicants who contact us. Applicants are tracked throughout the process and data collated for analysis. Quarterly recruitment reports to be evaluated.

- **COVID – 19 and Marketing**

During these uncertain times there will be a focus on online content as well as print.

7 FUNCTIONS OF THE PRIVATE FOSTERING SERVICE

7.1 Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

Haringey's children social work staff and the Fostering Service have overlapping duties in relation to Private Fostering and a shared responsibility to assess and evaluate the suitability of Private foster placements. The respective responsibilities of the allocated staff are outlined below.

- **Responsibilities of MASH**

- Respond to all notifications regarding a proposed or actual Private Fostering arrangement.
- Make initial contact with the Private foster carer, the child, parents and anyone else with parental responsibility to gather basic information about the proposed or actual placement and ascertain that it is a Private Fostering arrangement.
- If it is established that it is a Private Fostering arrangement refer the child and the carer to the social work team and the Fostering Service within 24 hours of receiving the notification.
- Evaluate whether the provision of support or other services would diminish the need for the child to be placed with Private foster carers.
- Carry out initial checks to ensure that the welfare of the child is safeguarded and protected.

- **Responsibilities of the Private Fostering Senior Practitioner**

- Conduct an assessment of the suitability of the Private foster carers and other members of the household.
- Conduct an assessment of the suitability of the accommodation and the wider environment.
- Carry out all necessary checks i.e., DBS for Private foster carers and all members of the household who are over 16 years of age.

- Provide on-going advice, support and assistance to the child, carer, parent or others with parental responsibility, where necessary.
 - Supervise the placement and monitor its suitability for the specific child/ren.
 - Ensure that Regulation 8 visits are carried out in accordance with Private Fostering regulations.
 - Monitor the carer's compliance with any requirements that have been made.
 - Make a recommendation as to the suitability of the Private arrangement in all aspects required by Regulations.
 - Consider what other action should be taken or services provided to promote the child's welfare.
 - In the event of any concerns, take action in accordance with the department's wider policies and procedure.
 - To carry out the annual review of the Private foster carer and the arrangements.
- **Assessment**
 - The London Borough of Haringey Children's Services has a duty to assess the suitability of all potential or actual private fostering arrangements that come to the Local Authority's attention or that they have been notified of.
 - All privately fostered children will have an Assessment completed following notification of the private fostering arrangement, in order to assess their needs and to ascertain whether they require any additional services to be provided.
 - The Local Authority will undertake such checks and enquiries to ensure that the carers identified by the parents as private foster carers are able to discharge the responsibilities of private foster carers to a satisfactory standard.
 - Local authorities are under a legal duty to ensure that the welfare of a privately fostered child is being promoted and safeguarded and must carry out assessments of proposed and current private fostering arrangements to make sure the child is safe and well cared for. Assessments should be completed within 42 days from the date of notification or as soon as the outcome of DBS checks is known, whichever is soonest. Once the Fostering Team has been notified, the Fostering Team will undertake DBS checks.
 - Assessments should be carried out by assessment team social worker. The purpose is to assess:
 - the capacity of the private foster carer to look after the child and meet their needs
 - the suitability of the premises and private fostering household
 - the suitability of the care arrangements, including contact and financial support.

- Where assessments are being carried out before the arrangement starts, the information gathered during the assessment should provide parents with enough information to make an informed decision about whether private fostering is suitable for their child, and whether a specific private foster carer is able to meet their child's needs.
 - Where assessments are being carried out on existing arrangements, the purpose should be to decide if the arrangements are safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare, and what action needs to be taken if the child's needs are not being met.
 - Assessments should be based on the *Framework of Assessment* and should be used to assess **proposed and on-going** private fostering arrangements. Assessments must, where possible, involve meeting with the parents, the child and the private foster carer and members of their household who are 16 years or over.
- **Assessment of the child by Assessment Team Social Worker**
 - Assessment of the child should look at:
 - their developmental needs and progress
 - the quality and permanence of previous care and relationships
 - how separation and loss are being dealt with (parents and carers may need advice on the impact of separation) and any arrangements for contact
 - their sense of self-worth, self-image and identity and how being privately fostered may affect this
 - their cultural, linguistic and religious needs and how these will be met
 - their wishes and feelings regarding the private fostering arrangement.
 - The *Framework of Assessment* should be the basis of any assessment of the child's needs and should be linked to the 5 outcomes for children.
 - The child should be seen alone, and if they are not seen alone, the reasons for this should be recorded on the assessment record. The private fostering social worker must ensure that children with verbal communication difficulties are able to use a preferred method of communication. Where English is not the child's first language, an interpreter who is independent of either the parent or the carer should be used as part of the assessment.
 - The assessment should consider the child's wishes and feelings about the private fostering arrangement taking the child's age and understanding into consideration.

- The child should be given a copy of the “Private fostering information for children” leaflet and should also have the contact details of the private fostering social worker.
- The assessment team social worker should ensure that parents provide private foster carers with adequate information about the child’s health, including any health records held by the parent. Arrangements must be in place to register the child with a GP in the area.
 - Private foster carers should also be informed of any treatment the child is receiving and a written agreement between the parents and the private foster carer should be drawn up that enables the carer to consent to medical examinations and treatment.
 - The assessment team social worker should check what arrangements are in place for the child’s education, including early years provision. Private foster carers should be made aware of the importance of the child attending school and being supported to do well academically.
 - Where there are difficulties in finding a school place, the private fostering social worker should link with the Schools Admissions team and support the parents and private foster carers to identify a suitable school place.
 - Private foster carers may need advice and support to help them meet the child’s needs arising from their culture, religion or ethnicity, especially if the carer does not share the child’s cultural or ethnic background. Parents should be encouraged to consider these issues when making private fostering arrangements so that there are clear expectations of how the private foster carer will meet these the child’s cultural needs.
 - It is important that the child is aware of what contact they will have with their parents and other family members and the private fostering social worker should establish what arrangements have been made for contact. Consideration should be given to Fostering Senior Social Worker providing support for contact with extended family in the UK especially for children whose parents are abroad.
 - The private fostering social worker should be aware of those children who have little or no contact with parents or family during the course of the private fostering arrangement; these cases may require further consideration of the child’s status and the possibility of the child having been trafficked considered.
 - Where a privately fostered child has come from abroad, the assessment team social worker should actively investigate their immigration status and take any necessary steps to ensure that where applicable, an application to remain is made on the child’s

behalf before they reach 18 years.

- If the assessment is being carried out prior to the private fostering arrangement beginning, the child's parents should be given general advice and information about private fostering and the role of Fostering Senior Social Worker in safeguarding the child.

- **Assessment of the private foster carer and household**

- The private fostering social worker should meet with the private foster carer and all members of the household aged 16 and over who are living at the placement as part of the assessment process.
- Assessment of the private foster carer should look at:
 - their capacity to look after the child and meet their developmental needs and their needs arising from their culture, religion or ethnicity
 - the suitability of their accommodation (including any health and safety risks to the child, and sleeping arrangements)
 - the suitability of their household
 - whether they are able to provide a safe and stable environment for the child.
- The assessment must include the following checks on the foster carer, members of the household above 16 years and frequent visitors to the household above 16 years: -
 - Police checks and/or a DBS check (written consent must be provided before police checks are made using the form shown at appendix 1);
 - Haringey's records to see if there was any involvement with the family
 - other local authorities in which they have lived in the past 10 years,
 - Ofsted to check for any disqualifications relating to child minding or childcare
 - if the carer provides information that suggests social workers should check back further than 10 years, further checks should be taken up.
- The assessment team social worker, must ensure, the private foster carer and adult members of their household should be asked to complete and sign a declaration of suitability which gives consent to checks being carried out for the purposes of the assessment. Checks are taken out by administrators based in the assessment team.
- As part of the assessment, there should be a discussion around the private foster

carer's views on discipline and how they would manage the child's behaviour. The private fostering social worker can offer advice on behaviour management in line with the advice given to Haringey's own foster carers.

- The Assessment team social worker should consider the carer's capacity to meet the child's developmental needs in the light of their experience of childcare and the impact of their lifestyle, for example if they work. The quality of household relationships should also be taken into account.

- **Recording and authorisation of assessments**

- Assessments of private fostering arrangements will include ensuring that the child or young person's physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development is satisfactory and needs arising from relationship with their family including contact, his/her religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic background are being met. The assessments will include evidence that the accommodation as well as the parenting capacity of the private foster carers are suitable and meet the needs of the child.
- Private foster carers will be given advice on the child or young person's individual needs in order to enhance their ability to care for the child. In completing the private fostering assessments, consideration will be given to ensuring that each child is healthy, safe, able to enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.
- Assessment may take place on proposed or current arrangements depending on when notification was received. A record of all information gathered during the assessment process is taken including information about the agreement between the parents and private foster carer for the care of the child, an assessment of the child's developmental needs and the private foster carer's capacity to meet these needs.
- The assessment considers the appropriateness of the private fostering arrangements and concludes with a recommendation as to whether or not Haringey should support the arrangement, whether any requirements should be imposed on the private foster carer, and any advice that needs to be provided in order to enhance the care arrangements.
- If the assessment indicates that the child has unmet developmental needs, that there are child protection concerns regarding the care arrangements or that there are

concerns about the suitability of the carer, a referral will be made back to MASH to consider threshold for statutory assessment.

- On receipt of the notification, the Assessment team social worker should complete a notification record and select the outcome “Private fostering assessment” to enable them to begin recording onto the private fostering workflow on Mosaic.
- To meet performance indicators, the episode must be opened within 7 days of the notification and the assessment completed within 42 days of the notification.
- The Fostering team manager will authorise the assessment on completion.

- **Monitoring private fostering arrangements**

- To ensure that the child’s welfare is safeguarded and promoted on a continual basis throughout the duration of the arrangement, the Private Fostering social worker will visit the child and the private foster carer every 6 weeks in the first year of the arrangement and then every 3 months, as required by the private fostering regulations. The purpose of the visits is to monitor the care arrangements in order to ensure that the child’s needs are being met and to look at any further support required by the child or the private foster carer in relation to caring for the child.
- All visits are recorded to include information on the private foster carers household, records when the child, the carer and members of the household were seen by the social worker, and how the care arrangements are meeting the child’s needs and safeguarding and promoting their welfare. The record also contains information on how arrangements for contact and financial support are working, checks that the child is in receipt of universal services such as health and education, and explores how the child’s cultural, ethnic, religious and language needs are being met by the private foster carer.
- The social worker will record any advice given or action to be taken, and any recommendations on whether the care arrangements remain suitable or if any requirements need to be imposed on the carer. The social worker may also recommend that a referral is made to MASH where the child has unmet needs or where there are child protection issues.

- **Providing advice and support**

- The Private Fostering service is the principal source of advice and support on private fostering matters in Haringey for parents.

- Information is also available through Haringey's website. Information and support will also be provided by the social worker through their contact with parents, private foster carers and professionals as requested or required.
- Haringey's on-going contact with children and young people in Private Fostering arrangements will also include a responsibility to provide appropriate advice and guidance and to identify any individual support requirements with the Private foster carer.

- **Parents**

- Parents may require advice around whether or not private fostering is the right choice of care for their child, or whether a specific private foster carer is able to meet their child's needs. Parents may also require help in looking for an alternative to private foster care in the event that they are unhappy with proposed or current arrangements.
- Issues around attachment should also be discussed, and the private fostering social worker needs to emphasise to parents the need for them to remain in close contact with their child throughout the duration of the arrangement.
- It is important that parents are advised of the need to ensure that all aspects of the arrangement are agreed in advance and recorded in a written agreement with the private foster carer and should include provision of financial support and the proposed duration of the arrangement. This is to ensure that the placement remains stable and avoids breakdowns that would have a negative effect on the child.
- Parents should be encouraged to give private foster carers as much information about the child as possible so that the carer can make an informed decision about whether or not they are able to meet the child's needs and provide a good standard of care.
- Advise and support will be available to parents who are looking at private fostering arrangements. Parents who are considering private fostering can contact the service to discuss whether private fostering is in the best interests of their child, or to obtain advice on other services or help available as an alternative to private fostering.
- Parents are also able to get advice on any issues that may need to be addressed within a private fostering arrangement such as financial support for the child, what

contact will look like for important people in the child's life or the impact of private fostering on the child.

- The purpose of the advice is to help parents make an informed decision on private fostering, and to help them make sure that any private fostering agreement they enter into what is right for their child.

- **Private foster carers**

- Private foster carers can access support through the private fostering social worker. They will also receive regular visits from the social worker who will be able to advise them on training needs that may support and enhance the care of the child in their care.
- Private foster carers should be given advice that enables them to care for the child and meet their individual needs in much the same way that supervising social workers would advise Haringey's foster carers. This includes ensuring that the child has access to universal services such as health and education and referring on to other agencies or voluntary groups for extra support.
- Private foster carers are encouraged to keep relevant records to share with parents, for example on health, education and significant events in the child's life. This information will be important when the child returns to live with their family.
- Privately fostered children should have the contact details of the private fostering social worker and have access to an advocate, or a Haringey based support group that they can contact for independent advice.
- Private foster carers will have access to the same training as Haringey's foster carers which ranges between varied topics involving the care of all aged children with varying needs. The Private Fostering social worker can also help private foster carers access information, advice and support in relation to the child's ethnicity, culture, religion and language if this is required in order to meet the child's needs.

- **Children**

- Children can get support and advice on private fostering from the Private Fostering social worker, who will visit them regularly to monitor their progress and ascertain their wishes and views.
- Privately fostered children are provided with information about private fostering that is age appropriate and helps them to understand their right to be safeguarded.
- Children should be encouraged to speak openly about their experience and to

inform the social worker where they are unhappy about any aspect of the care they receive.

- If following any assessment, the child may also have an allocated worker if there are concerns around the care of the child. This will allow a further opportunity for the child to be visited by their own social worker on a regular basis.

- **Professionals**

- Professionals, agencies and private and voluntary organisations are provided with information leaflets to raise awareness of their role regarding notification of private fostering arrangements. The Private Fostering service can also provide professionals with general advice on private fostering issues, such as recognising private fostering arrangements, making notifications, and accessing suitable services and resources for privately fostered children. Multi-agency strategic forums are used to promote and raise awareness around private fostering and will have a further demonstration around the use of the Private Fostering App following its launch.

8 SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN IN PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 There may be instances where the Private Fostering Social Worker may be concerned about the welfare of a child in a private fostering arrangement. In these instances, the Private Fostering worker will refer privately fostered children to the MASH for a social work service where an assessment of the suitability of the private fostering arrangements or a visit under Regulation 8 indicates concerns regarding the child's needs and the private foster carer's ability to meet these needs. Referrals will also be made whenever any child protection issues arise.

8.2 Following receipt of the referral, the MASH team will establish if the child meets the threshold for a social work service, the case will be allocated for a child and family assessment. On completion of the assessment, the social worker, in consultation with the manager or senior, will decide what action needs to be taken to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. This could lead to the child being allocated their own social worker for intervention.

8.3 This may involve providing extra resources to the child as a child in need and/or providing support to the private fostering arrangement, or it may require intervention under child protection procedures or accommodating the child.

8.4 It is also important that all those who might come into contact with a Privately fostered child are aware of the need for such arrangements to be notified to the Local Authority. In particular professionals working in the universal services of health and education have a pivotal role as they will often be the first to become aware of such arrangements. Such agencies share the Local Authority's responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Privately fostered children. Other agencies need to be aware that failure by a Private foster carer or parent to notify a Local Authority of a Private Fostering arrangement is an offence and if Local Authorities are not aware of such arrangements, they cannot carry out their duty to satisfy themselves that the welfare of the children concerned is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted.

8.5 In addition, other agencies may also be responsible for the provision of services for Privately fostered children where there is an assessed need.

9 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- **Policy and Procedure**

Haringey ensures that privately fostered children's welfare is satisfactorily safeguarded, and the council's statutory duties fully discharged by ensuring that all staff involved in delivering the Private Fostering service have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

To achieve this, staff are provided with comprehensive policies and procedures that enable them to carry out their duties to a high standard and within statutory timescales.

- **Staff Training**

The training needs of individual staff, including Private Fostering social workers and other front-line social work staff, is discussed and identified during regular supervision with line managers and tailored to the individual needs of the worker, depending on their role in delivering Private Fostering services.

10 MONITORING THE DISCHARGE OF FUNCTIONS AND COMPLIANCE WITH PART 9 OF THE CHILDREN ACT 1989

10.1 The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 require Local Authorities to monitor the way in which they discharge their functions under Part 9 of the Children Act.

10.2 The Local Authority monitors compliance and evaluates of effectiveness in improving practice in relation to private fostering via several means including:

- Performance data from Protocol;
- Data collated on the Private Fostering Management Spread sheet;
- Tracking the progress and outcome for all privately fostered children;
- Consultation/ surveys with children, young people and their carers.

10.3 Line Management and Auditing

- As well as managerial oversight through supervision and signing off reports, the Fostering Team Manager will be expected to monitor compliance through carrying out audits of a sample of cases once every three months.
- The purpose of these audits is to ensure that all required areas of work have been completed to a high standard, within the required timescales and that this has been achieved through:
 - Multi agency working;
 - Partnership with children and families;
 - Child focused practice.
- In fulfilling Regulation 12 the Service Manager for Fostering will monitor the way the division complies with and discharges its statutory duties and functions in relation to private fostering. At present the service has very low numbers of referrals and active private fostering cases. The monitoring meetings will be implemented when the service exceeds 5 Private Fostering cases.
- The meeting will lead on the following:
 - Tracking the progress and outcome for every privately fostered child that the Local Authority has been notified of;
 - Checking what other action, if any, is taken to ensure that the welfare of a privately fostered child is being, or would be, satisfactorily safeguarded or promoted (e.g. child protection measures);
 - Reviewing the performance data from Protocol;
 - Reviewing and analysing Private Fostering Data
 - Evaluating action taken to raise staff, partner agencies and public awareness and the effectiveness of those campaigns and activities, through multi agency audits under the governance of the HSCP;
 - Reviewing how the service responds to notifications received;
 - Reviewing Arrangements for determining the suitability of all aspects of a private fostering arrangement - including the accommodation and the wider environment in which privately fostered children are placed;

- Reviewing arrangements for providing advice to all concerned and interested parties;
 - Disseminating findings and themes from audits and performance data monitoring, consultations;
 - Quality assurance of assessment and support.
- Actions and recommendations resulting from the reviews and scrutiny by the Monitoring Meetings will be incorporated into the plan of work for the fostering service and other services as appropriate. This is to ensure that the service continues to develop; that there is robust monitoring of the impact of awareness raising activity; early identification of gaps within the service and so that examples of improved performance are captured and built upon.

11 COMPLAINTS

11.1 Information on making a complaint is provided to private foster cares once their approval is completed. Adults and children are encouraged, to discuss any concerns about the service with their social worker and/or team manager.

11.2 A complaint can be raised through Haringey Council's website – www.haringey.gov.uk/contact/council-feedback

11.3 Alternatively, a member of the complaints team can be spoken to by calling 0208 489 3424.

12 REGULATION

Haringey's private fostering service is regulated by Ofsted at:

Ofsted National Business Unit Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

Telephone: 08456 404040
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

