

Appendix 1

Haringey Private Fostering Annual Report

1st April 2024- 31st March 2025



Introduction

Haringey Fostering Service is committed to supporting the upbringing of children within their families of origin, wherever possible.

While Haringey Fostering Service fully discharges its responsibilities in respect of private fostering, it seeks to do so in a way that is supportive of children, young people, parents, and carers.

Haringey Fostering Service does not intend to make judgements about or interfere in the arrangements that parents make for the care of their children, except where this is necessary to safeguard the welfare of privately fostered children.

We will work together with children, young people, parents, and carers to ensure that:

- Children and young people are provided with high quality care that meets their needs
- Private foster carers are provided with support and training to help them to provide high quality care
- Birth parents feel able to seek help and guidance from Haringey Fostering Service.

Haringey Fostering Service recognises 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 Haringey Fostering Service of private fostering arrangements.

The National Minimum Standards for private fostering apply to Local Authorities.

Haringey Fostering Service has three functions in relation to Private Fostering:

1. To raise public and professional awareness about private fostering and the legal requirement to notify Haringey Children's Social Care/ Fostering Service about any actual or planned private fostering arrangements.
2. To respond to any private fostering notifications, assess the arrangements and to provide support to the children or young people and adults involved.
3. To promote the information advice and support that are available to: privately fostered children and young people; private foster carers and prospective private foster carers; parents and those with parental responsibility.

Background information

Following the Laming Report (2003), regulations relating to Private Fostering were amended and strengthened by Section (44) of the Children Act (2004). The following year

two further documents were published: The National Minimum Standards (NMS) (2005) and the (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulation (2005), which clearly set out the role of the Local Authority, the Parent and the Private Foster carer and related professionals.

Under Standard (7.9) of the National Minimum Standards for private fostering, local authorities are expected to effectively monitor the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering, including to provide a written report each year, for consideration by the Director of Children's Services, which includes an evaluation of the outcomes of its work in relation to privately fostered children within its area. (Supporting Criteria 7.9 NMS for Private Fostering).

Section (7.10) the National Minimum Standards requires local authorities to report annually to the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board about how it satisfies itself that the health of privately fostered children in its area is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted including how the local authority cooperates with other agencies to do this.

Legal framework and relevant standards

A privately fostered child is defined as 'a child who is under the age of 16, or 18 if the child has a disability, and is placed for 28 consecutive days or more with an adult who is not a relative.'

A relative in this situation is either a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, or aunt. The term relative also extends to include stepparents.

Partners of the mother or father of a child (who are unmarried) would not qualify as a relative, neither would extended family members such as great aunts, great uncles or parent's cousins.

Examples of private fostering arrangements

- Children sent from abroad to stay with another family, usually to improve their English or for educational opportunities.
- Adolescents who, having broken ties with their parents, are staying in short term arrangements with friends or other non-relatives.
- Children living with host families, arranged by language schools or other organisations.
- Children living with members of the extended family, e.g. great aunt.

The relevant legislative framework in relation to private fostering is outlined below

- Children Act (1989) Guidance Private Fostering.
- Children Act 2004 (Section 44 amends Section 67 in the 1989 Act)
- The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations (2005).
- National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering.

Statutory Expectations

Children who are privately fostered are amongst the most vulnerable, and the local authority must be notified of these arrangements. The local authority has a duty to assess the private fostering arrangements for the child when there is a notification received, or the local authority becomes aware that a private fostering arrangement already exists.

Under Standard 7 of the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering, the local authority is expected to effectively monitor the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering, including providing a written report each year, for consideration by the Director of Children's Services, which includes an evaluation of the outcomes of its work in relation to privately fostered children within its area.

Local authorities are required to promote awareness of the requirement to notify and monitor compliance, and to appoint an officer for this purpose. Haringey Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) has a duty to raise awareness about private fostering issues in the community and across the partnership.

Promoting the Welfare of Privately Fostered Children

A qualified social worker will undertake an initial visit to the placement within 7 days of the private fostering notification. The social worker must carry out initial checks on all household members including the privately fostered child, notify all relevant agencies of the placement and ensure that necessary links are, or will be, established with other agencies. An assessment report should be completed following the outcome of this.

Having undertaken the initial visit, the social worker will arrange for checks to be completed including, health and school checks, carers suitability declaration, local authority checks for addresses within the last 5 years, health and safety checks on the accommodation, confirmed consent of the arrangement from the person who has legal parental responsibility, DBS checks on the private foster carer(s) and household members over the age of 16 years old and also a reference to be obtained for the private foster carer(s). It may be necessary to undertake further visits to clarify matters.

If the arrangements are assessed as suitable, the social worker should confirm this in a letter to the private foster carer and parents. If the arrangements are unsuitable, it will be necessary to consult a senior manager, who may in turn seek legal advice, with a view to considering initiating prohibiting procedures and to review alternative plans for the child.

Monitoring, Support & Advice

Following the initial visit, the social worker is to complete further visits: at least every 6 weeks in the first year then, at intervals of no more than 12 weeks in subsequent years, if this reduction is assessed as a safe and appropriate to do so.

The social worker should assess during these visits whether the private foster carers are promoting the cultural and ethnic needs of the privately fostered child. The child's overall development and emotional wellbeing should be considered, as should any educational and health issues. After each visit, the Social Worker should prepare a report.

The Social Worker also provides support and advice to the carer and child. This may include liaising with agencies on behalf of child/carer including health, education, and the UK Border agency, assisting them to access services, providing advice and support for example when there is a risk of breakdown of the arrangement, referrals to relevant agencies for additional support, for example CAMHS and/or other specialist services.

The End of a Private Fostering Arrangement

Where notification is received that the private foster placement has ended, the social worker should ascertain the name and address of the person now caring for the child and his or her relationship with the child.

The social worker should notify the health and education agencies (as well as the new local authority where necessary) of the end of the placement in writing.

Private Fostering Service in Haringey

Private fostering arrangements in Haringey are assessed by front line social workers who determine these arrangements in conjunction with their Team Managers and Service Managers, parents and the multi-agency networks around the child.

Following the OFSTED 2023 Inspection, (<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50213624>) it was found that "The identification of and response to children in private fostering arrangements" needs to improve. To address this, the Assistant Director for Safeguarding initiated through the Principal Social Worker a support surgery for practitioners to review cases open to safeguarding where the children were not living with their biological birth parents.

There were 20 surgeries held, and this supported both the practitioners and the carers to better understand pathways to permanency for children and young people. This included identifying potential Private Fostering arrangements. This further supported increased awareness, understanding and knowledge around Private Fostering arrangements within Haringey Children's Social Care.

OFSTED completed a focused visit to Haringey Children's Social Services on the 11th and 12th February 2025 <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50271681>, which found improvement in several areas for children in care. Although Private Fostering was not specifically mentioned it was noted that "at the last inspection in February 2023, the experiences and progress of children in care were judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders have maintained a focus on service improvement in this area of practice. Tracking and quality assurance systems have enhanced their line of sight to practice and performance. Leaders know their services well, and most importantly, the impact of these services on children and families". This focus within the service has continued.

Haringey Children's Services has a dedicated specialist private fostering Social Worker appointed, who regularly reviews the private fostering arrangements at the point that they are deemed to be residing in a private fostering arrangement.

The private fostering Social Worker is expected to provide monitoring, advice and support to the privately fostered children and carers for the first year of the arrangement through statutory visits every 6 weeks.

The Private Fostering Social Worker is based in the Fostering, Adoption and Special Guardianship Team in Children's Social Care. Children's Cases are overseen by the Team Manager and the Service Manager for Fostering, Adoption and Permanence. Private fostering arrangement assessments are authorised by the relevant Team Manager and or Service Manager.

Haringey Private Fostering Notifications 2024-2025

There were 5 children open under a Private Fostering arrangement during this period. Of the 5 arrangements 1 child was open since 13/12/2021 and involvement ended 16/11/2024 when the child turned 16 years old; 1 child was open since 27/08/2024 and involvement ended when the child turned 16 years old 16/12/2024; and 1 child open since 27/04/2023 remained open until 16/05/2025 when the child turned 16.

In summary, during the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 there were 5 private fostering arrangements in place, with 2 of those private fostering arrangements ending before 31 March 2025 due to the child turning 16 years old. At the end of 31st March 2025, Haringey had 3 open Private Fostering cases.

There were 3 notifications of new Private Fostering arrangements received between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025. The referrals for the other 2 children were received in 2022 and 2023.

Of the 3 notifications, 2 progressed to the private fostering assessment stage. The remaining 1 notification did not progress as the child lived with their cousin for a short period, less than 28 days, then moved to stay with their paternal aunt before returning to the care of their father. No private fostering assessment was required due to the arrangement with the cousin not exceeding 28 days.

Overall:

- 66.66% progress to assessment
- 33.33% did not progress to assessment.

Table : Total Number of Private Fostering Arrangements open during 2024-2025

There was a total of 5 known Private Fostering arrangements during this period in Haringey.

	2024-25	%
8B - Privately fostered: Overseas child who intend to return	1	20.00
8C - Privately fostered: Overseas child who intend to stay	2	40.00
8D - Privately fostered: UK child in educational placements	0	
8E - Privately fostered: UK child making alternative arrangement	2	40.00
8F - Privately fostered: Other	0	

Notifications not accepted between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025

3 notifications were received for potential Private Fostering assessment, 1 did not progress to a private fostering arrangement assessment.

Reason for not progressing:

- 1- Young Person was living with their father. The father travelled briefly. The child stayed with their cousin less than 28 days, then moved to stay with their paternal aunt before returning to the care of their father.

Sources of notification for the 3 notifications as of 31 March 2025

3 notifications came from the child's school. The notifications in this period are coming from an appropriate source.

It is anticipated that current and planned development work will build on this. The expectation is that referrals would also be coming from other professionals and organisations such as faith organisations, health professionals, childcare professionals, the police etc.

The Role of Other Agencies

Those who have day-to-day contact with children and families- especially those in universal health and education services are most likely to identify a private fostering arrangement. Haringey Children's Social Care partners have a duty to notify Haringey Children's Social Care about any private fostering arrangements, to enable it to fulfil its statutory functions (as outlined above).

The responsibility of the other agencies to Haringey Children's Social Care of private fostering arrangements is underpinned by the Replacement of Children Act 1989 Guidance on Private Fostering and the duty to cooperate in Section 10 of the Children Act 2004.

It is essential that all agencies, organisations and workers who encounter children and families:

- Can recognise private fostering arrangements.

- Understand the private fostering notification requirements; and
- Can make a notification to Haringey Children's Social Care.

Partners should ensure that groups of staff have access to information about private fostering and access to relevant training.

For more information about how Haringey Children's Social Care is meeting its duty for increasing awareness of Private Fostering follow this link: <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/children-young-people-families/childrens-social-care/fostering/private-fostering>

Haringey Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) has an important role in raising professional awareness of private fostering and the requirements for professionals in partner agencies to notify Haringey Children's Social Care of private fostering arrangements. There is guidance on their website at <https://haringeyscp.org.uk>

On the website, professionals and communities can also download The Haringey Private Fostering App or alternatively search "Haringey Private Fostering" within their App Store. This app has been created as a resource and training tool to help multi-agency professionals and communities develop an understanding of what private fostering is, why it may happen, and their role in identifying and engaging with families caring for a child in a potential private fostering arrangement.

Within Standard 7 of the National Minimum Standards for private fostering, the local authority is required to report annually to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements Board on how it satisfies itself that the welfare of privately fostered children in its area is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, including how it cooperates with other agencies.

Raising public and professional awareness during 2024-2025

Haringey Private Fostering Team will continue to raise public and professional awareness about private fostering and the legal requirement to notify Haringey Children's Social Care/ Fostering Service about any actual or planned private fostering arrangements.

The Private Fostering Social Worker is based in the Fostering, Adoption and Special Guardianship Team in Children's Social Care. This service is the lead on providing specialist advice and support regarding private fostering across Children's Services and to external agencies. Throughout this reporting period, ongoing work has been undertaken to increase awareness and understanding within Haringey Council, borough and with external agencies and key professionals of Private Fostering and how to report a private fostering arrangement.

- Haringey's fostering webpage has been updated to include the Private Fostering link and information. This is located on the Haringey Council website.
- We have our own Private Fostering App which can be accessed via Google Play and the App Store.

- Throughout the reporting period there have been articles in Family Hubs, Haringey Foster Carers, GP and Health professionals Newsletters.
- Digital communication and in person presentation have been utilised to raise awareness with professionals across organisations through Viva Engage with a reach to 1375 staff members.
- Physical presentations have been delivered to nursery staff; Designated Safeguarding Leads and school staff and Multifaith, community groups and GP forums.
- Bi-monthly information sessions are delivered at The Family Hubs, Fostering information sessions, Wood Green Library and North Middlesex Hospital.
- We have also implemented a multi-agency Private Fostering working group to look at further awareness raising activities.
- Technology, media and advertising strategies have been used to increase reach and awareness of Private Fostering. This includes the Private Fostering app, A5 flyers with a QR code to the Private Fostering app, digital screens in Wood Green Library (6 weeks 3 x per year) and across Haringey borough for 6 weeks in August. Articles in Metropolitan Life Magazine (October edition) and Haringey People Extra (January edition).

The Private Fostering Social Worker attends training and briefings on private fostering policy and practice. In addition, the Private Fostering Social Worker attends the Coram BAAF Private Fostering Special Interest Group.

The Private Fostering Social Worker also attends meetings with other local authorities, which is a forum in which to share information and improve policy and practice.

Timescale of initial visit within 7 days of the referral

Overall, where it has been identified that children are residing within potential private fostering arrangements, visits are being undertaken to see the children in their arrangements within 7 working days. The recording system Liquid Logic (LCS) shows that 3 initial visits for private fostering were completed.

Out of the 3 initial visits recorded 2 took place within 7 days of Haringey Children's Social Care being aware of the child potentially being in a private fostering arrangement. 1 visit was conducted 10 days post notification. The reason for this is the allocated social worker seeking to complete a joint home visit with the private fostering senior social worker. Delay was due to the availability of the private fostering social worker.

Ongoing monitoring and support of Private Fostering arrangements

There was a total of 5 known Private Fostering arrangements during this reporting period in Haringey.

The Private Fostering Regulations require that all children in a private fostering arrangement are seen at regular intervals which are no more than 6 weeks in the first 12 months. If the arrangement is stable and there are no concerns, then the visiting will be completed no more than 12-weekly.

The visits are appropriately being recorded as Initial Private Fostering visits (Regulation 4 visit), 6 weekly visits and Reg 8 visits (following Private Fostering Assessment).

Visit Summary

Child 1- Referred in August 2024 and was visited regularly and within timescale until the child turned 16 and involvement ended 12th December 2024.

Voice of the child

"I have been living with my host family in London since I arrived in the UK on 31/08/2024. I have enrolled at college for 1.5 terms to study Criminology, Psychology, and English Literature. I enjoy studying, but I am worried that there is no psychology teacher. I enjoy the vibrant atmosphere of London. My host family are caring and provide for my needs, including preparing breakfast, dinner, and sometimes lunch on weekends when I am at home. I have my own bedroom, and I am not worried about my safety".

Child 2- Referred December 2024 and was visited within timescale until the child and family assessment was completed. Ongoing visiting and engagement with the private fostering social worker have been delayed due to the carer and wider family being resistant to work with children's social care or to provide child's father's contact details. The private fostering social worker has contacted the child's Social Work Team and informed that the Private Fostering Team have been unable to engage the family and requested a joint meeting to consider the status of the child. An unannounced home visit will also be conducted.

Voice of the Child

"I feel fine, and I like going to school sometimes. I don't know why I only like going to school sometimes, but I do not like going to school every day. I don't have a favourite subject at school, but I have friends, and I like to play football, although I am not on the school team because I don't want to be. If I am worried about anything I speak to my uncle, I don't speak to anyone else if I am worried. I live with my uncle, aunt, her mother and my two cousins and I get along with everyone. I speak to my father every day and see him once a week".

Child 3- The initial private fostering notification was received from Barnet Family Court June 2024. The private fostering assessment visit was completed on 2nd July 2024 within timescale and was completed jointly with the child's Social Worker and the Private Fostering Social worker. Following conclusion of the proceedings and completion of a Child and Family Assessment, this case was transferred to the Private Fostering Team in August 2024. There after 6 weekly visits continued for the duration of the reporting period.

Voice of the Child

"I have not been to my dad's house, but I know where he lives when he comes to the UK. I think I have a close relationship with him. I know that my dad has struggled with his businesses, but he has always been supportive and provided for me. My dad often checks in with me on the weekends and during the week. I am often introduced to uncles I have never met before and there is always someone new that I am meeting as a relative.

I go to regular family events and outings; I have a huge family back in Uganda. I don't want to go back to live in Uganda as I like living in the UK".

Child 4- Referred in December 2021. 6 weekly visits were completed for the first year and then visits continued within timescale of 12 weekly until child turned 16 years-old and involvement ended November 2024.

Voice of the Child

"I am learning English, and I have joined a library, and I like to read. I like school and studying, but I am a bit anxious about maths. I feel that I can speak to my carer, and I like living with her and my stepsister.

Child 5- Referred March 2025. The initial visit was completed 20th March within timescale. 6 weekly visits were conducted for the remainder of the reporting period.

Voice of the Child

"I like school reading my books and my friends make me happy. I like the colour pink, and I like eating pasta and casava leaf. At home my brother makes me happy. I enjoy watching television and playing with my tablet".

Timescale of private fostering assessments

The private fostering regulations require that decisions about the suitability about private fostering arrangements should be completed within 42 days of the notification being received.

Of the 3 assessments initiated between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025:

- 3 were completed within the 42-day timescale (100%)

Age of children under private fostering arrangements as of 31st March 2025

Of the 5 Private Fostering arrangements 3 were between the ages of 15-16 years old, 1 was 11 years old and 1 was 5 years old.

Ethnicities of children under a private fostering arrangement as 31st March 2025

The range of ethnicities of children in private fostering was recorded as follows:

White UK	0
Asian	0
African	3
Black Caribbean	1
White European	1
Mixed Parentage	0
Chinese	0
Ukrainian	0
Other	0

Gender of children under a private fostering arrangement 1st April 2024- 31st March 2025

Of the children living in private fostering arrangements as of 31st March 2025, 4 were female and 1 was male.

There were no Private Fostering arrangements recorded where a child arrangement order (CAO) or Special Guardianship Order (SGO) has been secured during this period.

Private Fostering Special Interest Group

The British Association for Adoption and Fostering (CORAM BAAF) continues to facilitate a special interest group for Private Fostering. The Senior Practitioner for Private Fostering attends this special interest group.

Support for Private Foster Carers

Haringey Private Foster carers are provided support via the Regulation 8 visit to the child; the carer also receives a visit/call from the Private Fostering Senior Social Worker to provide support as may be required. Private Foster Carers can access support from the Haringey Foster Carers Support Group and access training and support as required.

How to make a notification

Haringey MASH: 020 8489 4470

Children's Social Care Out of hours: 020 8489 0000 or email:
fosteringrecruitment@haringey.gov.uk

Haringey Fostering Service: 020 8489 3754, email:
fosteringrecruitment@haringey.gov.uk, or use our enquiry webform

Conclusion

Areas for development- evidence on file of notification to agencies of the end of PF arrangement and this should also be recorded in chronology.

Transition and engagement from Referral and Assessment Service to the Private Fostering Team.

It is assumed that there are more active Private Fostering arrangements within Haringey than is known to Haringey Children's Social Services. There is a need to increase awareness within the borough amongst agencies, organisations and professionals who come into contact with children.

There are no recorded audits on Private Fostering arrangements between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025. This is an area for development. However, the information gathered indicates that the timeliness of visits and private fostering assessments is good and initial visits are mostly being completed within 7 working days.

Given the size of the population of Haringey, suggests that there are more children living in Private Fostering Arrangements than have been identified, which means the ongoing awareness raising with partner agencies is critically important, to promote timely notification of any such potential arrangements.

While there is positive work being conducted to increase awareness of Private Fostering within the borough, there remains a need to improve on our early identification of children living in private fostering arrangements to ensure that these children are visited in a timely manner, assessments commenced, and support offered. This will be a key area of focus for 2025/26.