



Kirklees Council

Children Service Directorate

Early Support and Child Protection Service

Private Fostering Policy and Procedure

Contents

Definition of Private Fostering	3
2. Introduction	3
3. Legislative Framework	4
4. Local Authority Roles and Responsibilities	5
5. Aims and Objectives	5
Working with Partner Agencies	6
Promoting Awareness	6
Advice and Support for Parents	7
Advice, Information and Support to Private Foster Carers	8
Information and Support for Privately Fostered Children	10
Police Records	11
Departmental Records	11
Statutory Checks	11
Outcomes of assessment	12
If the placement is assessed by the social worker as unsuitable	13
Imposing requirements	13
Imposing prohibition	14
Responsibility for Supervision of Arrangement	14
Visiting Requirements	14
7.40 Monitoring Arrangements	15
Review Arrangements	16
Training - Private Foster Carers	16
Training - Social Care Staff	16
Corporate and Management Responsibilities	17
Complaints	17
Local Safeguarding Children’s Partnership	18
Review	18

DEFINITION OF PRIVATE FOSTERING

1.1 A private fostering arrangement is one where children under the age of 16 or 18 in the case of disabled children, are cared for and provided with accommodation in the carer's own home, by a carer who is not their parent or a close relative*, does not have parental responsibility for a period of 28 days or more. In these circumstances, it is the responsibility of the parent, carer, and anyone else involved in making the private fostering arrangement, to notify their local authority (LA) of the private fostering arrangement.

**A relative under the Children Act 1989 is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or step-parent'.*

1.2 It is imperative that the local authority is notified if a child is living with someone who is not their parent or a 'connected person' for longer than 28 days. The local authority needs to be satisfied that the placement is suitable, and the child is safe. To be defined as 'private fostering', the child must be living with that person for longer than 28 days and this should be continuous but can include occasional short breaks.

1.3 There are several circumstances and reasons why parents decide for their children to be looked after by someone else. Many such arrangements constitute private fostering. Private fostering arrangements can be a positive response from within the community to difficulties experienced by families, but children subject of such arrangements is known to be a diverse and potentially vulnerable group.

1.3 Overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of a privately fostered child remains with the parent or person with parental responsibility, however local authorities have a legal duty to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children in their area who are or who will be privately fostered is being or will be satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted.

2. Introduction

2.1 This policy provides a description of private fostering arrangements within Kirklees. It is designed to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards 2005, Standard 1 and to provide a clear description/guide to the service for professionals, the public, council members and external organisations. The policy also sets Children's Social Care practice in delivering its duties and functions in respect of private fostering.

2.2 Once as an authority we receive a notification of a prospective private fostering arrangement we will arrange for a social worker to carry out the following checks within seven days to establish whether the arrangement is suitable:

- 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 people living with the foster carer
 - visit and speak to the child alone to ascertain the child's wishes and feelings unless the officer considers it inappropriate
 - speak to and, if it is practicable to do so, visit the parent or person with Parental Responsibility for the child
 - investigate any other matters the social worker believes to be relevant such as whether an agreement for financial arrangements and for the care and maintenance of the child have been reached, arrangements for the child's education etc.
- 2.3 The social worker for Private Fostering will ensure that the intended duration of the fostering arrangement is understood and agreed by both the parents of the child and the proposed private foster carer.
- 2.4 Once the Social Worker has undertaken enquiries, they will prepare a written report to the Local Authority detailing their recommendations. If the Local Authority determines that an arrangement is unsuitable, but the child cannot be returned to his or her parents, the Authority must decide what action to take to safeguard the child's welfare. This may mean providing support to the carer or, in some circumstances, finding alternative Local Authority accommodation.
- 2.5 The Social Worker who is allocated for the child will offer advice on how to claim benefits, as well as parenting support and assistance in bringing families closer together. If the arrangement is ongoing, the Local Authority must arrange to visit the child at least every 6 weeks during the first year and at least every 12 weeks after the first year.
- The social worker for the child must complete a report after every visit and can also visit the child if the child requests this, or if the parents request a visit.
- 2.6 The Private Foster Carer will have to make the Local Authority aware of certain changes in circumstances, such as change of address, any criminal convictions they acquire or anyone living at the address acquires, loss of employment etc.

3. Legislative Framework

- 3.1 The Government introduced new legislation on private fostering in Section 44 of the Children Act 2004 and The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 which came into force on 18th July 2007.
- 3.2 These measures, together with the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering and the new role for Local Safeguarding Children Boards in looking at private fostering, were designed to focus Local Authorities' attention on private fostering considering the Victoria Climbié inquiry.
- 3.3 The legislative framework applicable to private fostering arrangements includes:
- The Children Acts 1989 and 2004

- The Children and Young Person's Act 2008
- Disqualification from Caring for Children Regulations 2004
- The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005
- Children Act 1989 Guidance on Private Fostering (2005)
- National Minimum standards.

3.5 Kirklees Council is committed to ensuring its duties and functions in relation to private fostering are carried out in accordance with the requirements of legislation and guidance for Private Fostering (2005)

4. Local Authority Duties and Functions

4.1 Kirklees Council works in accordance with the legislative and regulatory framework. The duties and functions flowing from the legislative and regulatory framework require the Council to.

- Promote public awareness of private fostering notification requirements and develop a programme of communication activities for local authority staff, other professionals and agencies and to develop a range of up-to-date publicity materials.
- Promote public awareness of responsibilities where a child is in a private arrangement whose parents live abroad and arrangements have been made for their child to reside in the UK with a person who is not identified as a connected carer.
- Provide advice to parents or persons with parental responsibility, to those proposing to privately foster a child, to existing private foster carers and any other person concerned with a privately fostered child. Where required this may involve utilising International Social Work services.
- On receipt of a notification of a proposal to privately foster a child or on receipt of a notification of an existing private fostering arrangement, arrange for an officer of the authority to visit within seven days and undertake enquiries in accordance with Regulation 4(1) Children Act 2004 and provide a written report which concludes either that arrangements are satisfactory or that requirements should be imposed or that the carer is disqualified or that the carer should be prohibited from private fostering.
- Have in place and implement procedures for determining the suitability of all aspects of a private fostering arrangement and for ascertaining that prospective and existing private foster carer, their households and their premises provide an environment in which the child's welfare will be safeguarded and promoted.
- Exercise their powers to impose requirements on private foster carers with respect to the provision of care for a child or children.

5. Aims and Objectives

5.1 In relation to private fostering Kirklees Council aims to.

- Promote awareness in the wider community in area of the requirement to notify the local authority of all private fostering arrangements with a view to increasing the overall number of known private fostering arrangements and reducing the number of retrospective notifications. To include awareness

raising where a child is coming to live in the UK with a unconnected carer and arrangements are made between parents and UK resident.

- Provide a comprehensive assessment and support service to privately fostered children and private foster carers.

5.2 The Council acknowledges that privately fostered children are a diverse and particularly vulnerable group. Many do not have a parent figure in a position to safeguard their welfare.

5.3 The Council accepts its responsibility to ensure the welfare of every privately fostered child in the borough is satisfactorily safeguarded and protected, that risks to their welfare are reduced and that services are made available which promote positive outcomes.

5.4 The objectives of services to privately fostered children, their parents and to private foster carers are.

- To place the welfare, safety, protection and needs of children at the centre of processes. Such considerations will take precedence over those of anyone else involved.
- To listen to children and consider their wishes and feelings when making decisions on their behalf.
- To respect and promote the child's specific needs, self-image and sense of identity arising from ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language or disability when decisions are made.
- To maximise the life chances of privately fostered children by taking a holistic and lifelong view of their needs.
- To actively engage parents and/or persons with parental responsibility.
- To assess private foster carers fairly and thoroughly against their ability to provide care for the child concerned, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or disability.
- To support the role of private foster carers by delivering or facilitating appropriate advice and support services in response to assessed need.
- To work in partnership with parents, children, carers and their families, other professionals and agencies to ensure that services are provided to meet assessed needs.
- To ensure that all enquiries/notifications concerning private fostering are dealt with promptly and efficiently.
- To prevent persons identified as unsuitable from privately fostering children.

Working with Partner Agencies

5.6 We aim to work with our partner agencies to provide all privately fostered children/young people with the information they need to access their services and to liaise with relevant professionals. All partner agencies will be given information on their responsibilities regarding notification under the Regulations 2005. Information materials have been sent out to schools, health organisations.

Promoting Awareness

5.7 Children's Services are responsible for fulfilling the Council's duty to promote public awareness of private fostering notification requirements. To achieve

enhanced awareness in the wider community Children's Services, provide publicity materials and deliver awareness raising events.

5.8.1 Awareness raising activities include:

- Production of leaflets and posters. A range of leaflets are available specific either to young people, parents or prospective carers. A leaflet is also available for professionals or others who may encounter private fostering arrangements.
- Distribution of posters and leaflets to Children's Centres, Health Centres, G.P surgeries and schools. Posters and leaflets are to be displayed in all Council buildings to which the public have access.
- Use of Kirklees website to publicise the issue of private fostering
- Private Fostering is included in safeguarding events held and undertaken by the safeguarding officers for schools. This is included in their DSL training and refresher training in all schools.
- Private Fostering is included in safeguarding awareness undertaken by Children Service Duty and Advice Team with General Practitioners.

6. ADVICE, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

6.1 The local authority has a duty to provide information and advice to parents or persons with parental responsibility, to those proposing to privately foster a child, to existing private foster carers and any other person concerned with a privately fostered child.

Advice and Support for Parents

6.2 The local authority will provide advice and support to parents as needed. Parents will be provided information as to the notification processes and implications of private fostering arrangements. In every private fostering arrangement notified to the local authority, the assessing social worker will consider and assess whether direct provision of services to the parent by the local authority or another agency would remove the need for the parent to have the child privately fostered and provide such services or make a referral as required.

- Parents will be provided the name and contact details of the social worker responsible for visiting them and their child.

Parents will be advised that:

- No person chosen by them to be a private foster carer has parental responsibility for their child, but s/he is empowered to do what is reasonable to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.
- S/he or the person with parental responsibility carries the prime responsibility about decision-making in the private fostering process.
- They must notify the local authority of arrangements for the care of siblings not included in the private foster care proposals.

Parents will be advised about the exercise of their parental responsibilities.

The parent must provide the private foster carers with as much information as possible concerning the child including details of:

- Health
- Dietary needs and preferences
- School/education needs
- Hobbies
- Religious preferences
- Ethnic background

6.3 They should discuss with private foster carers the expectations of day-to-day management of the child's life.

- They should establish clearly with the private foster carer the purpose of the fostering arrangement. At no stage should the child be left to feel insecure or not knowing what their future is.
- They should review on a regular basis with the private foster carer the purpose and duration of the arrangement. Unplanned moves or changes should be avoided, and the child should be involved in any discussion concerning their future.
- They should ensure that financial arrangements made and agreed with the private foster carer are kept.
- They should confirm to the local authority that all those with parental responsibility are agreeable to the private fostering placement. The address of all those with parental responsibility should be made available to the local authority.
- The parents of a privately fostered child should maintain contact between siblings. Only in extreme circumstances of concern should contacts be discouraged.
- Parents will be advised about any concerns which arise in respect of their child and whether they should make alternative arrangements for the child.
- The parent, or any other person who has parental responsibility, for a privately fostered child must notify the local authority if the private fostering arrangement is ended.

Advice, Information and Support to Private Foster Carers

6.4 Assessing social workers will ensure that private foster carers or prospective private foster carers receive information about the requirements in respect of notification. This information is available in leaflet form from Children's Services and Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership Website

6.5 The social worker will provide private foster carers including prospective private foster carers information/advice on:

- Entitlement to child and other financial benefits
- Resources or facilities available to assist in meeting the needs of the child they are caring for or plan to care for in respect of religion, culture, race and language, parenting strategies and other training and support as identified.
- Support services available in the local area –including health, education and housing services, youth support services, voluntary organisations and community groups.
- legal requirements and responsibilities of private fostering.

- 6.6 During the assessment process the assessing social worker will advise the private foster carer:
- Though not having parental responsibility for the child, they are empowered to do what is reasonable to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.
 - On promoting and safeguarding the child's welfare – including the need to notify the local authority of any concerns of possible abuse.
 - Treating and accepting the child as a member of the private foster carer's family.
 - Ensuring the child can express his/her own identity and on establishing relationships that ensure his/her views are heard in helping him/her attain a high level of self-esteem.
 - Promoting and facilitating regular contact between the child, parents, siblings, extended family and other significant persons where this promotes the welfare of the child.
 - The requirement to notify the local authority of any change of address, which is likely to be effective for more than six (6) weeks.
 - The requirement to notify the local authority of any person (child or adult) who begins or ceases to be part of the household, including another child who is to be privately fostered.
 - The requirement to inform the local authority of any new convictions relevant to any person living or employed in the household and that such conviction may lead to the private foster carer being disqualified from caring for children.
 - The requirement to inform the local authority if they cease to care for the child/ren concerned. Notification should be in advance but no more than 48 hours later and should include information as to the name and address of the person who has taken over the care of the child/ren.
 - A notification of ending a private foster placement must state the reasons for termination.
 - The requirement to inform the local authority immediately if a privately fostered child dies whilst in their care.

Dependent on circumstances other advice may include.

- 6.7 Keeping a record of the child's life history and development while in their care. This should include the child's medical history, school reports, contact with significant people in the child's life including visits from the local authority, significant events, photographs, the child's achievements and any certificates or information relating to them. This could also include keeping a financial record of any payments received for the child by the parent. These records should be sufficient for the child, as s/he grows older, to have a complete picture of his/her upbringing. If the child changes carers, the records, or a copy, should be passed on to new carers. Any changes to care should be planned and the child supported to understand reason for change of care arrangement.
- 6.8 Training will be made available to private foster carers as appropriate. A range of training is available to foster carers in general, the child's social worker in conjunction with the assessing social worker will consider the training needs of private foster carers as part of the supervision of the

placement and will advise them of any relevant training courses they assess would assist them in carrying out their functions as private foster carers.

Information and Support for Privately Fostered Children

- 6.9 All privately fostered children/young people will have a named social worker and be provided their contact details.
- 6.10 The social worker will provide age-appropriate information and advice on:
- What being privately fostered means.
 - The responsibilities of a private foster carer.
 - What to do if they are worried about their care or any other arrangements pertinent to their care.
 - Advocacy services and their right to participate in decisions about their lives.
- 6.11 Privately fostered children with a disability who may remain privately fostered up to the age of 18 years will be provided with additional information about.
- Transition arrangements for service provision by adult services
 - After care provision under Section 24 of the Children Act 1989 as these privately fostered children 'qualify' for advice and assistance, in kind or in cash, under the Act.
- 6.12 Information will be provided in a range of languages and formats as needed and where appropriate independent translators and interpreters will be used to support children, young people and their parents and carers.

7. ASSESSMENT OF PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

- 7.1 Private Fostering Services for Kirklees Council are located within Kirklees Children's Services. The Council has clear arrangements in place for responding to and assessing notifications of private fostering.
- 7.2 All 'notifications' of actual or proposed private fostering arrangements meet the threshold for social work intervention.
- 7.3 Notifications of private fostering arrangements in respect of children previously unknown to Children's Social Care are assessed by a social worker from the Duty and Advice Service and transferred to the Assessment and intervention Service and a social worker is allocated. The Private fostering assessment is then requested and completed by the assessing social worker from the fostering service.
- 7.4 Where 'notifications' are received in respect of arrangements for children already known to Children's Social Care and who already have a social worker the private fostering arrangement assessment will be undertaken again by the assessing social worker from the fostering service. When this is complete the child's social worker will remain involved and support the child and private foster carer.
- 7.5 At any point during assessment of private fostering arrangements in respect of any child (whether a previously open case or not) the assessing social worker may trigger a more in-depth assessment if it is felt that the welfare of the young person is compromised.

7.6 The Local Authority will assure itself that people proposing to or already acting as private foster carers are suitable people to do so. To do this the Local Authority will make several enquiries and have discussions with a range of agencies. All these will have the aim of establishing.

- a) The suitability of the person and his/her household;
- b) The suitability of the accommodation in which the private fostering is to take place.
- c) That the arrangements will meet the child's needs.

7.7 In order that the Local Authority can complete its duties about the suitability of the private foster carer the following checks will be made.

Police Records

7.8 The proposed private foster carer and all members of the household over 16 years of age must complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring check.

7.9 A record of convictions does not necessarily preclude a person from becoming a private foster carer although certain people are automatically disqualified.

7.10 These are people who have committed offences against children or offences involving injury or threat of injury to another person. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act does not apply to people proposing to become private foster carers therefore all convictions should be declared even those which may be counted as 'spent' in other circumstances.

Departmental Records

7.11 The social worker will check the Liquid Logic System to check as to whether the proposed private foster carer is known and in what context. If the private foster carer is known to have previously lived in another local authority area, checks should also be made with the relevant local authority. Where they have lived outside of the UK consideration will be given for checks to be completed internationally.

Statutory Checks

7.12 The assessing social worker will check with health visitors, schools, education services and other relevant professionals as to whether the proposed private foster carer is known and in what context. Where children were previously non UK resident undertake a check with the relevant embassy of their country of origin

7.13 The social worker completing the assessment will conduct a series of meetings/ interviews with the proposed carers as individuals, with other members of the household and with the household. The assessment will cover.

- The ascertainable wishes and feeling of the child regarding the private fostering arrangements.
- The purpose and duration of the private fostering arrangement.

- Whether direct provision of services to the parent by the local authority or another agency would remove the need for the parent to have the child privately fostered.

7.14 The child's physical, educational, emotional, social and behavioural needs and development whether the parents have provided.

- An accurate medical history.
- Written general consent to medical treatment.
- The personal child health record for the private foster carer.
- Information on dietary needs.
- The arrangements for the child's medical and dental care and treatment and in particular that the child is registered with a general medical practitioner.
- The arrangements for the child's education and in particular that the education authority have been informed of the fostering arrangement.
- The agreement about disciplinary arrangements for the child.
- Whether the child's needs arising from their religion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background are being and will be met.
- The parenting capacity of proposed private foster carers.
- The extent to which household relationships will affect the placement. The general lifestyle of the proposed private foster carers.
- Whether the birth parents understand their financial responsibility.
- Whether the child's parents are exercising parental responsibility for the child.
- Whether contact arrangements for the child and their parents is satisfactory.
- Whether the premises in which caring is to take place are safe for the privately fostered child.

7.15 This means inspection of.

Sleeping accommodation. - Bedrooms should reflect the needs and individual expectation of each child. The privately fostered child should have at least an individual wardrobe, drawer space and a single bed. The privately fostered child should be allowed to personalise their space with pictures, cuddly toys etc and be able to keep any personal possessions in a secure locked cupboard if necessary.

Standard and suitability of accommodation having regard to the child's age and welfare.

- Fires, electrical sockets, windows, floor covering and glass doors.
- Cooking facilities and safety in the kitchen or cooking areas.
- Washing and toilet facilities.
- Equipment -such as cots are British Standard approved.
- Whether private foster carers are aware of hazards, particularly to young children, and take appropriate precautions e.g. Use of stair gates, safe storage of medicines and dangerous household substances, presence of pets and arrangements for their control, use of car seats, safety belts, use of smoke detectors.

Outcomes of assessment.

- 7.16 The social worker undertaking an assessment of a Private Fostering Arrangement will complete the assessment on Liquid Logic using the Private Fostering assessment created within it. The social worker will make recommendations about the suitability of the placement and about the need for imposition of requirements on a placement or for 'prohibition' of an unsuitable person.
- 7.17 The assessment will be 'validated' on Liquid Logic by the Service manager for Fostering.
- 7.18 The local authority does not have the power to approve private fostering placements but does have the power to prohibit a person from privately fostering where they are of the opinion that
- s/he is not a suitable person (S69(2)(a) of the Act) the premises are not suitable (S69(2)(b) of the Act)
 - neither the premises nor the accommodation is suitable (S69(2)(9c) of the Act)
- 7.19 If the Placement is Assessed as Suitable but the Person is Disqualified.
- 7.20 If the placement is assessed as suitable but a person is disqualified because either.
- (i) S/he has been convicted of certain specified offences or
 - (ii) An order has been made at any time in respect of a child in his/her care or
 - (iii) Their rights in respect of a child have been removed at any time or
 - (iv) S/he has been refused registration as a child minder or similar or
 - (v) S/he managed or had a financial interest in a children's home where registration was refused or cancelled or
 - (vi) S/he lives in the same household as someone who is disqualified
- 7.21 Discussions should take place with the Private Fostering Service who should escalate to the Head of Service for consideration of the assessment and agree next steps to be taken. It may be appropriate to take legal advice.

If the placement is assessed by the social worker as unsuitable

- a) The social worker will advise the parents of the child of the outcome of their assessment and advise them of the possible need for them to make alternative suitable arrangements.
- b) The Head of Service will consider the assessment. They may decide to:
 - (i) **Impose requirements** (ii) **Impose prohibition**

Imposing requirements

- 7.22 The local authority has the power to impose requirements relating to the placement or premises about the number, age and sex of children cared for, the standard of accommodation or equipment, arrangements for the health and safety of a child and in respect of any special arrangements relevant to a particular child.
- 7.23 Requirements may include provision of family support services under S17 C.A. 1989 for a child in need.

- 7.24 The local authority will use its powers to recommend 'requirements' as appropriate.
- 7.25 The private foster carer must be notified in writing of any 'requirements' and of the right of appeal, therefore it is essential that legal advice is sought when considering imposition of requirements.
- 7.26 Once a requirement has been made, a private foster carer has 14 days in which to appeal to the Court during which time the requirement has no effect.
- 7.27 If the requirement concerns the child's safety, it is essential the parents are kept fully informed so they may take appropriate action in relation to the child's welfare depending on the private foster carer's response to the requirements. If the requirement has not been complied with within 14 days, the local authority may then prohibit the person from private fostering.

Imposing prohibition

- 7.28 Prohibitions may apply to a named person in respect of placements of any child or in respect of a named child or named premises. As when considering imposition of 'requirements' it is essential to seek legal advice before imposing a prohibition.
- 7.29 The local authority will use the power to recommend prohibition as appropriate.
- 7.30 Notice of prohibition will be sent by recorded delivery or delivered by hand. The notice will specify the reason for prohibition and inform the private foster carers they have 14 days in which to appeal to the Court.

Responsibility for Supervision of Arrangement

- 7.31 Supervision of privately fostered children in a private fostering arrangement is undertaken by the qualified social worker who is allocated to the child.

Visiting Requirements

- 7.32 The minimum visiting requirements by the Local Authority are within one week of the arrangement commencing and then every six weeks for the first year of that arrangement. Thereafter at not less than 12 weekly intervals determined by the circumstances of the case or whenever reasonably requested by the child or private foster carer.
- 7.33 The social worker will arrange to see the child alone during welfare visits, unless there are circumstances, which make this inappropriate. The reasons for this should be recorded in a management case note.
- 7.34 It is an offence for a private foster carer to refuse to allow a child to be visited or to obstruct the social worker in the exercise of their duty. If such difficulties are encountered, then advice will be sought from practice manager and legal services.

7.35 Purpose of Visits

Safeguarding the child.

This should include:

- Observation of the overall standard of care.
- Seeing the child's bedroom on some visits.
- Seeing the child alone, unless this is inappropriate.
- Making some visits unannounced.
- Making some visits when all members of the household are present.
- Monitoring the welfare of the child.

7.36 If concerns arise about the care of the child, the social worker will inform the parents of the child who then have the responsibility to make alternative arrangements if the placement is not satisfactory. If the parents are not able or willing to make alternative suitable arrangements, it may be necessary for the local authority to consider whether this places the child at risk and in need of protection or accommodation from the local authority.

7.37 If the child is not achieving a satisfactory level of health or development without the provision of services, the social worker should complete a Child and Family Assessment and consider provision of services (S17 C.A. 1989).

This includes.

7.38 The child, parents and private foster carers being able to contact the social worker and encouragement of improvements in child care in line with the general welfare duty. Checking requirements are being met and whether they need to be changed.

Providing advice. This may include:

7.39 Advice from the social worker about the child's care and development and ensuring the private foster carer receives advice from other professionals as necessary e.g. GP health visitor, school.

7.40 **Monitoring Arrangements.** The social worker will:

- Monitor the arrangements and contact with the child's parents or persons with parental responsibility and consider whether they are appropriate and whether any intervention is necessary. Satisfy the local authority that the arrangements for the child are satisfactory.
- Make sure that the private foster carers are receiving the level of support they feel is necessary and offer advice about particular incidents or activities.

7.41 **Written Records**

7.42 There shall be a written report after each visit recorded on liquid Logic using the Private Fostering workspace (visit under regulation 8) which details:

- Whether the child was seen alone.
- Information about the child's welfare.
- Information about the placement.
- Views of the child and carer.

7.43 All records will be reviewed by the Team Manager who will validate on Liquid Logic to indicate that oversight has been exercised. Any matters of concern will be brought to the attention of the Service Manager. An individual record

will be kept for each child privately fostered and a separate case record for the private foster carers.

Review Arrangements

- 7.44 A child who is privately fostered is a child in need and the private fostering plan in respect of the child should be reviewed by at 3 months and at a minimum frequency of 6 months thereafter, and should involve contributions from the child, parents and all those involved with the child.

Training - Private Foster Carers

- 7.45 The Local Authority offers a range of training packages to foster carers and other child carers in general. This training will be made available to private foster carers as appropriate.
- 7.46 The child's social worker will consider the training needs of private foster carers as part of the supervision of the placement and will advise the private foster carers of any relevant training courses they assess would assist them in carrying out their functions as private foster carers. This can be done in consultation with the private fostering assessor and advice taken.

Training - Social Care Staff

- 7.47 Information on the duties and functions of the local authority in respect of Private Fostering is available to all staff via the intranet and is made available to them through hub briefings and workshops.
- 7.48 Children's Services social work team managers are responsible for ensuring their teams are aware of all policies and associated procedures.
- 7.49 Training on private fostering will form part of the induction of all new staff via the mandatory safeguarding packages.
- 7.50 Information on private fostering and the duties of all agencies towards privately fostered children will be included in all multi agency child in need training.
- 7.51 Training on social work duties and functions regarding private fostering are included in the multi-agency induction program for new children's services staff and is mandatory for all child care social work staff.

This training ensures that social work staff have knowledge and understanding of:

- The legal definition of private fostering arrangements.
- The legislative framework, timescales and statutory duties placed upon the local authority in respect of private fostering arrangements.
- Their safeguarding duties in respect of private fostering arrangements.
- The assessment requirements and concept of 'requirements' and 'prohibitions'
- Where to go to access further advice.

8. Arrangements For Monitoring and Evaluating The Quality and Effectiveness Of Kirklees Council Private Fostering Services

- 8.1 Kirklees Council is committed to providing services, which comply with Regulations and the National Minimum Standards for private Fostering. From 1st April 2022 responsibility for oversight of private fostering lies with the Service Director for Early Support and Child Protection Service.
- 8.2 The Service Manager for the Connected Carers Assessment Team will provide a monthly Performance Report which will detail the activity of the team to include quality of Private Fostering Assessments, Raising Awareness of Private Fostering within Kirklees Communities and training/support for Private Foster Carers and Training Programme for Multi-Agency Partners via the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership and Kirklees Council Induction for Social Workers.
- 8.3 The Connected Carers Assessment Team In conjunction with the Assessment and Intervention Service will undertake joint Practice Learning Day twice yearly.
- 8.4 Head of Service for Connected Carers Assessment Team will provide assurance to the Quality Assurance Board as requested and a Private Fostering Report will be provided September 2022 and annually thereafter.

Corporate And Management Responsibilities

- 8.5 All policies and plans are presented for discussion and approval to the Children's Management Team.
- 8.6 They are then considered and ratified by the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- 8.7 The annual Private Fostering Report will be presented to the Service Director for Early Support and Child Protection and will include performance data together with an evaluation of issues and outcomes in Kirklees in relation to privately fostered children.

Complaints

- 8.6 Kirklees Council have in place a Complaints Procedure and a designated Complaints Officer/s. The complaints procedure underpins all service areas and ensures comments and complaints are heard and responded to in a fair and timely way. The Directorate would aim to respond to any complaints within 10 working days.
- 8.7 When a private foster child or a private foster carer has a query or is not satisfied with the service they are receiving, every attempt will be made to resolve the problem. However, should the matter become a formal complaint, the complaints procedure would be followed. In such cases the complainant is advised to contact the Complaints Section if they wish and to put their complaint in writing. The member of staff dealing with the issue will provide the complainant with an information leaflet on the complaint process.
- 8.8 All privately fostered children will be provided information as to how to gain support from Advocacy Services about how to make a complaint and how to obtain access to an independent person who can help them with the complaint process. All children, birth parents and private foster carers will be informed of their right to complain to Ofsted: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,

Manchester, M1 2WD. Their telephone number is 0300 123 1231 and the email address is enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership

- 8.9 As referenced in the 'Corporate and Management Responsibilities' paragraph above, the Private Fostering Annual Report will be presented by the Director of Children's Services to the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership, to allow transparency around how the authority has complied with its duties and functions in relation to Private Fostering in the preceding year.

Review

- 8.11 The Statement of Purpose and Procedures in respect of the discharge of local authority duties in respect of private fostering will be reviewed annually in line with any changes in legislation or guidance to ensure that the Council's duties and functions in relation to private fostering are effectively discharged. Annual Review will be conducted by the senior manager with lead responsibility.