



Bromley
Safeguarding
Children
Partnership



PRIVATE FOSTERING REPORT

6 MONTH UPDATE

JAN 2021 - JUNE 2021

"By working together with partner agencies, we will ensure that every child in Bromley has the right help at the right time to keep them safe and to meet their needs, so that they achieve, thrive and reach their full potential."

Transforming Bromley to Deliver Better Outcomes for Children and Families (2020)

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1. Introduction

The Private Fostering Regulations apply when children or young people, under the age of 16 years (18 if they have a disability) live with a person who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. The Local Authority where the arrangement takes place needs to assess the suitability of this arrangement and review it under the Private Fostering Regulations to ensure the placement can safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Arrangements for Private Fostering were updated in the Children Act 2004 and the Children (Private Arrangement for Fostering) Regulations 2005, which set out the duties of Local Authorities in their arrangements for Private Fostering. The National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Local Authorities were published in 2005 alongside this.

This report gives an overview of activities in relation to privately fostered children in the London Borough of Bromley from 01.01.2021 to 01.06.2021 and how the council has discharged its duties in relation to Private Fostering.

This report also outlines the activities, which have been undertaken to promote awareness of the notification requirements regarding children who are living in Private Fostering arrangements.

The London Borough of Bromley has, over the past year, continued to promote local understanding and awareness of Private Fostering and sought to improve how we meet the needs of the children and young people concerned. This includes using audits to review our own performance and to identify where improvements need to be made. Bromley gives consideration of all examples of good practice regarding Private Fostering and demonstrates where possible innovative practice and aims to also exceed the National Minimum Standards.

Bromley continues to:

- Consider its Private Fostering responsibilities with the upmost importance and senior managers continue to communicate the importance of ensuring that privately fostered children are safeguarded and seen within Statutory Timescales.
- Be proactive in identifying Private Fostering Arrangements and ensure that its assessments and visits are performed in line with legislation and good practice.
- Safeguard children and escalate cases to Safeguarding and Care Planning Services where necessary.
- Promote equality, diversity, and treating others with respect in line with Bromley's Transformation Programme (REAL Values): Respect, Empowerment, Ambition and Learning.
- Undertake regular Private Fostering Awareness Campaigns, which help to highlight Private Fostering Arrangements, draw attention to the legal definition and outline the call to action when a Private Fostering Arrangement is identified. Bromley will continue to develop good working relationships with its wider community and partner agencies in order to create and develop a comprehensive and systemic approach to identifying children and young people in Private Fostering arrangements.
- Maintain internal and external communication regarding Private Fostering arrangements using a wide range of publicity including digital innovation.
- Continue to take a leadership role amongst Local Authorities in Southeast England in best practice development.

2. Notification and Referrals Arrangements

The number of notifications has reduced considerably in Bromley over the last 6 months due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we have continued to receive notifications from some agencies we have seen a decrease in the number of referrals from our educational partners due to the fact that our young people from other counties were not allowed to travel within this period. We would often see referrals from Bromley School Admissions, Bromley School Welfare Inclusion, Language and International Schools, and Faith Groups which has not been the case due to young people not travelling to the UK to study.

We have received the following number of notifications during this period:

- Number of new notifications in last six months – **7 notifications**
- Number of cases held in last six months – **13**
- Number of case consultations – **2**

Month	Number of new notification <i>and source</i>	Notification made PRE or POST PFA arrangement	Active cases in the month (includes the new notification)	No Cases closed in the month	Reason/ Outcome at closure	Significant Learning in the month from cases or Awareness Activity or Training
FY 2021-22 so far						
Up to 14 June 2021	0	n/a	1			
May 21	0	n/a	2	1	1 - back to school	
Apr 21	0	n/a	4	2	1 - back to school 1 - turned 16	
FY 2020-21						
March 21	0	n/a	9	5	3 - back to school 2 - CLA	1 CLA case we had DRP due to drift-see learning re case reviewing and flagging up

Feb 21	1 (school)	Post	11	2	1 - back to school 1 - CIN in Lambeth	CIN in Lambeth liaison on work to safeguard the child; case flagged up to HoS.
Jan 21	6	Post	12 (2 also allocated in CWD and Safeguarding)	2	1 - turned 16 1 - SGO order	The 16yr old referred to MASH by Police 3 months later risk CSE and violence.

Notifications not accepted and offered Case consultation instead:

Alongside the above we had two more notifications made via MASH which upon screening by the Fostering Group Manager were not accepted as referrals as they did not meet the criteria and were sent back to MASH to move forward. Please see case explains below:

Case A, notified on 06.05.21, presenting issue – 14-year-old, family abuse, self-harming, child active CIN in Lewisham, living with friend in Bromley. Later transpired also at risk of CSE and concerns for the birth child in the family where she was staying. Group Manager discussed with Lewisham to take this forward and intervene.

Case B notified on 12.05.21. Presenting issue – 6-year-old on a Special Guardianship Order to grandmother in Nottingham, currently living with uncle in Bromley. Case referred into MASH by headteacher requesting early help for the 6-year-old with his concerning behaviors. Case passed onto Early Intervention and Family Support for support and Nottingham informed to undertake assessment of need.

3. Awareness/ Private Fostering Week

Private Fostering Social Workers have continued to work with our partner agencies, Health, and Education to ensure awareness regarding Private Fostering in our local area and the referral process.

CoramBAAF ceased publicising/promoting the annual Private Fostering Week as a national event last year. This was normally organised in mid-July. Bromley however took the decision to continue to promote Private Fostering week by organising this in July this year for Private Fostering awareness raising in our borough. Moving forward, from next year we are planning to move this to mid-June so as to target schools better before the summer break.

Private Fostering Week undertook the following campaign in July, please see below:

- Awareness for in house social workers and with stakeholders
- Postcard and article in Bromley schools bulletin with leaflet and reminder of website
- Postcard in bulletin for Designated Teachers
- Postcard and article in the Bromley GPs bulletin with leaflet and reminder of website
- Email to church ministries with leaflet and reminder of website
- Email to housing manager Bromley to cascade info for staff to be shared in team meetings
- Message on LBB Twitter and Facebook
- Two drop ins for Private Fostering week for LBB staff and also schools, GPs, and other stakeholders.

The following workshops for professionals organised via the Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership have been arranged:

- Friday 3rd September, 10:00 – 12:00
- Wednesday 24th November, 10:00 – 12:00
- Tuesday 8th Feb, 10:00 – 12:00

4. Networking

We are now part of the 'Private Fostering Practice Network' held by 'CORAM BAAF' for Private Fostering practitioners nationally.

We are also part of a virtual practitioner forum where ad-hoc information and informal support is exchanged on Private Fostering practice issues. This is again a national forum.

5. Practice Development

The Private Fostering social workers have continued to work closely with our partner agencies, Health, Education, Law Enforcement, Environment, Housing, and Faith and Religious groups in raising awareness about Private Fostering in our local area and in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of privately fostered children. Within the six-month period we have continue to link in with agencies using the virtual platform.

We remain resolute in raising 'Private Fostering Awareness' using different mediums, including articles about Private Fostering featured in newsletters, school circulars, and public places, keeping our message visible for Bromley residents.

We have also been raising awareness by sending messages via Twitter via Bromley Communications department. We have recently updated the Bromley Private Fostering website and the Private Fostering information as well as our app (Bromley Private Fostering App)

and awareness campaigns can be accessed online. We aim to continue with our drive towards digital innovation, especially given our new normal of working following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Private Fostering Website has been updated in line with the Bromley Corporate Website changes and it can be accessed via this link https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/159/fostering/990/private_fostering

We have continued to promote the 'Bromley Private Fostering App'.

6. Continuing Areas for Development:

- Review our Private Fostering processes to ensure good practice in the field is embedded in our service to privately fostered children and their carers
- Continue to be part of the Networking Interest Group and contribute to developments in Private Fostering in the region and nationally
- Continue with the transition to our new IT system
- Update the current App with new information
- Embed Private Fostering across the Permanency Service

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Date: **1/08/2021**