**Private Fostering in practice**

**Private Fostering actions required of Social Care staff by role:**

It is important that we get all aspects of the case management right for Private Fostering situations. A child who is Privately Fostered will be living in the care of someone who does not have Parental Responsibility for them and who is not a close relative so we should be aware of the potential vulnerability of that child

**Fostering Team Manager**:

* Once the referral is received in the fostering team it should be allocated to a Social Worker to undertake the assessment (NB *this allocation may also be done by the* Designated Manager for Private Fostering)
* At this point please ensure you are familiar with the DCC Procedures for Private Fostering (*CAYA Procedures online: Section 3.2*)
* Private Fostering cases should be discussed and a case note added in Supervision at monthly intervals.

**Social Worker**:

* At the point of being allocated the case please ensure you are familiar with the DCC Procedures for Private Fostering (*CAYA Procedures online: Section 3.2*)
* Notify the Designated Manager for Private Fostering that you are undertaking the assessment and confirm the criteria for Private Fostering
* You should undertake your Initial visit to see the child within 7 days of the Local Authority being notified of the PF arrangement (*or as soon as possible if that period has already elapsed*)
* Further visits to the child should be undertaken at intervals of no more than six weeks apart (*and more frequently if necessary for the case*) and should all be recorded using the workflow step **CS Social Care & Early Help Visit** (*make sure you have selected the correct visit type: Private Fostering Visit*)
* Use the **Single Assessment** workflow step to conduct your assessment of the Private Fostering Arrangement
* You will need to consider whether the proposed (*or existing*) arrangements are sufficient to meet all of the child’s needs, including how the child will be financially supported (*financial support for the child remains the responsibility of the Parental Responsibility holders although the Local Authority has discretion to offer additional financial support*)
* In the **Single Assessment** open and complete (*parts 1-4 initially*) the **Private Fostering Arrangement and Agreement** document (*accessed through the Forms & Letters tab*) to record whether the arrangement is suitable for the child – this document also contains the formal agreement for the Private Foster Carer(s) and the child’s Parental Responsibility holder(s) to sign (*a signed copy of this agreement should be uploaded to the child’s file and a copy given to each signatory*). The PFAA document should be authorised by the Team Manager (*section 3 – Verification*)
* A discussion should be made with the Team Manager and/or the Designated Manager for Private Fostering to determine if the referral meets the Private Fostering criteria. In some cases, it might be suitable to also manage Private Fostering cases under a Children in Need framework. This is often for more complex cases.
* You will need to request 2 references for the Private Foster carer(s) and also undertake a DBS check for all persons in the household over the age of 16
* If the Private Fostering arrangement is to proceed you will need to continue with a **CS Child’s Plan & Review** workflow - make sure you select the correct type of plan (*section 1 – Status and Type of Plan: Private Fostering*). This plan should consider any identified areas of need for the child that would be addressed in a CIN plan. If there are no other areas of need identified, then the plan should reflect the need to oversee and review the Private Fostering arrangement.
* The PFAA document should be updated at each review and authorised by the Team Manager (*PFAA document is also accessible through the Forms & Letters tab in the CS Child’s Plan & Review workflow step*)
* The child’s **Legal Status** should be amended on file to **Privately Fostered Child (S66 Children Act 1989)** and dated from the notification date of the Private Fostering arrangement
* The personal relationships of the child and the Private Foster Carers should be amended to show **Privately Fostered Child: Private Foster Carer**
* The child’s address should be amended to identify their new address (*use the heading Placement Address*)
* Review the suitability of the Private Foster Carer(s) every 12 months and provide a summary report to the Designated Manager for Private Fostering

**Team Manager**:

* At the point of starting a Private Fostering case on your team please ensure you are familiar with the DCC Procedures for Private Fostering (*CAYA Procedures online: Section 3.2*)
* The Team Manager should authorise the PFAA document in the Single Assessment (*section 3 – Verification box*)
* If the Private Fostering case is dual worked under Private Fostering and Children in Need criteria, the Locality Team Manager should oversee the reviews of the Private Fostering arrangement at the required statutory intervals (*within 1 month of first notification, within 3 months and then at not more than 6-monthly intervals*)
* The locality Team Manager retains responsibility for case management decisions and oversight of the case in respect of CIN responsibilities (*the Designated Manager for Private Fostering will give advice on specific cases and will undertake regular checks on open PF cases*)

**All:**

* Ensure that all assessments and CIN plans focus on the welfare of the child and the suitability of the placement for them
* Include updates on the relationships between the PF child and other members of the household, especially the PF carer
* Remember that if the prospective carers do not comply with the necessary checks in the assessment requirements then the PF arrangement cannot be approved by Social Care
* When the child reaches the age of 16 (or 18 if the child has a disability) or if the other criteria for Private Fostering no longer apply then the Private Fostering process should end, the Designated Manager should be notified and any further case involvement should proceed under the appropriate workflow