**PRIVATE FOSTERING – THE PROCESS**

This is a summary of the Private Fostering Process. Please refer to the information on Private Fostering in Bristol Children's Services Procedures Manual Tri Xfor full information and procedures.

For any queries relating to Private Fostering an email can be sent to private.fostering@bristol.gov.uk or you can phone 0117 3534196 and ask to speak to the lead Kinship Team Manager for Private Fostering Jayne Sabangan, Social Worker Paul Millman or a member of the Kinship Team.

Notification of Private Fostering should take place at least 6 weeks before the intended arrangement or as soon as you become aware of the arrangement, especially if the child is already living there.

* When notification or information is received from any source that a child is privately fostered, this information must be passed to **First Response,** this includes notifications from Language Schools. First Response check that the Private Foster Carer lives in Bristol, if not the notification needs to be sent to the relevant Local Authority.
* The relevant team to take responsibility for the privately fostered child is the duty or area social work team for the address of the birth parents, if they are resident in Bristol, or the team for the address of the private foster carer, if the birth parents are not resident in Bristol.
* First Response transfer new cases to the Social Work Unit that is on duty at that time except cases of foreign students coming to study in the UK which should be sent directly to the Kinship Team via the Private Fostering in tray on LCS.

If the case is sent to the areas this will be co-worked by a social worker in the area team who assesses the child and their needs, and a social worker from the Kinship and Special Guardianship Team who lead on Private Fostering and will assesses the carer’s ability to meet the child’s needs. Each of the social workers contributes to the Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record (PFAAR) held on LCS which the Child’s Social Worker initiates following the referral. Each social worker’s roles and responsibilities are as follows:

The allocated **Child’s Social Worker** will:

* Start the Private Fostering process by following the **LCS workbook on Private Fostering** which can be found on the Source**.**
* Alongside the Private Fostering Assessment, complete a C&F assessment to ascertain if the child is a **Child in Need**.
* Visit the child in the placement **within 7 working days of notification i.e. the date that the Local Authority became aware of the Private Fostering Arrangement, or potential Private Fostering Arrangement.** This visit should be **recorded on LCS as a “Private Fostering Initial Visit”.** All subsequent visits should be **recorded on LCS as a “Private Fostering Reg 8 visit” with a duplicate CIN case note.**
* Check the suitability of the accommodation, discuss the arrangement and assessment with the carers and the birth parents (or person/s with PR).
* Encourage Private Foster Carer and birth parent/s (or person/s with PR) to sign and complete the **Private Fostering Agreement**, **the form can be found on Tri** **X**. If not, the reasons should be clearly recorded in case-notes.
* Get permission for PNC checks to be sought for all adult members of the household which will inform the assessment and highlight any immediate safeguarding flags. This should be done by **emailing Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit at** **LSUDMBristol@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk**
* Open the Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record (PFAAR) on the child’s LCS record and complete the first part of the assessment comprising of the sections relating to the child’s needs.
* Assign the task on LCS to the Kindship Social Worker who will complete the sections on the carers capacity to meet the child’s needs. The full assessment should be completed **within 42 days of notification**. Refer to **LCS Guidance to completing the PFAAR** which can be found on the Source**.**
* If the Private Fostering arrangement is assessed as suitable the Kinship Social Worker assigns the task back to Child’s Social Worker to send on to their Consultant Social Worker to finalise.
* When the assessment is finalised on LCS under further action**:** **Visits under Regulation 8** should be selected otherwise it will not be possible for the Private Fostering Statutory visits to be recorded.

The allocated **Kinship Social Worker** will**:**

* Contribute to the Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record (PFAAR) on LCS – including completing the required checks: DBS, GP reference, Local Authority Check, 2 personal references, Health & Safety Checklist **within 42 days of notification**. Refer to **LCS Guidance to completing the PFAAR.**
* On completion of the Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record (PFAAR) the assessment is read by the Kinship Service Team Manager who decides if the Private Fostering arrangement is suitable. If there are concerns about the arrangement a conversation should be had with the Child Social Work team and consideration of referring to the **Requirements,** **Prohibition and Disqualification policy.**
* If the Private Fostering arrangement is assessed as suitable the Kinship Social Worker assigns the task back to Child’s Social Worker to send on to their Consultant Social Worker to finalise.
* When the assessment is finalised on LCS under further action**:** **Visits under Regulation 8** should be selected otherwise it will not be possible for the Private Fostering Statutory visits to be recorded.

Actions following completion of the Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record (PFAAR) will depend on whether or not the child is assessed to be a **Child in Need.**

If the child is considered to be a Child in Need

* Child’s Social Worker completes statutory visits to the child every six weeks for the first year and then every 12 weeks in the second and subsequent years. These visits are known as **Reg. 8 visits**. They **must be recorded on LCS by selecting the “Private Fostering Reg 8” visit** from the case note type in the drop down list **with a duplicate CIN case note**.
* Kinship Social Worker visits the Private Foster Carer at least every 12 weeks. These visits must be recorded on LCS on the carer’s tab and appropriate information copied on to the child’s record by selecting the **“Private Fostering Other”** from the case note type in the drop down list. If the child is seen as well as the carer the visit should also be **recorded as a “Private Fostering Reg 8” visit**.
* Annual Reviews should be completed jointlyby the Kinship Social Worker and Child’s Social Worker, with Kinship Social Worker leading.
* An annual unannounced visit should be completed by either the Child’s Social Worker or Kinship Social Worker.

If the child is not assessed to be a Child in Need

* The Kinship Social Worker completes statutory visits to the child every six weeks for the first year and then every 12 weeks in the second and subsequent years. These visits are known as Reg. 8 visits. They **must be recorded on LCS by selecting the “Private Fostering Reg 8” visit** from the case note type in the drop down list.
* Kinship Social Worker visits the Private Foster Carer at least every 12 weeks. They **must be recorded on LCS by selecting the “Private Fostering Other”** from the case note type in the drop down list. If the child is seen as well as the carer the visit should also be **recorded as a “Private Fostering Reg 8” visit**.
* Annual Reviews will be completedby the Kinship Social Worker.
* An annual unannounced visit should be completed by the Kinship Social Worker.

Involvement ends when the Private Foster carer or birth parent notifies the Local Authority that the arrangement has ended, or the child turns 16 years (18 if disabled). For guidance on ending a Private Fostering arrangement look for the LCS guide **ending-the-private-fostering-process on LCS.**