



THE LONDON BOROUGH  
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## Annual Private Fostering Report 2018/2019

**“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 (2019)***

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## 1. Introduction

**1.1** A private fostering (PF) arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (i.e. without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. Under the Children Act 1989 people who are classified as close relatives includes; a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of full blood or half blood or by marriage) or step-parent will not be a Private Foster Carer. However, a Private Foster Carer may be a cousin, great aunt, friend of the family or parent of a friend of the child. The period for which the child is cared for and accommodated by the Private Foster Carer should be continuous, but that continuity is not broken by the occasional short break.

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 is able to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

**1.2** This annual report gives an overview of activities in relation to privately fostered children in the London Borough of Bromley from 01.04. 2018 to 31.03. 2019. The report details how the London Borough Bromley has complied with its duties and functions in relation to Private Fostering. This includes how the welfare of privately fostered children have been safeguarded and promoted over the past 12 months.

Bromley's Private Fostering Statement of Purpose has been updated and outlines the definition of Private Fostering and the expectations on the local authority to meet this. This Annual Report should therefore be read in conjunction with the Statement of Purpose for 2018/2019.

**1.3** 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.

**1.4** 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.
- 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 systematic 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.

## **2. Private Fostering – A Definition**

**2.1** A Private Fostering (PF) arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (i.e. without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A person who is a close relative under the Children Act 1989 i.e. a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of full blood or half blood or by marriage) or stepparent will not be a private foster carer. However, private foster carers may be a cousin, a great aunt, friend of the family, parent of a friend of the child. The period for which the child is cared for by the private foster carer should be continuous.

**2.2** 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.

### **3. Planning on Private Fostering**

**3.1** Standard 1 of the National Minimum Standards requires that the Local Authority has a written statement or plan, which sets out its duties and functions in relation to Private Fostering and the ways in which they will be carried out. Bromley has developed a formal 'Statement of Purpose', which is attached as **Appendix 1**. The Bromley Safeguarding Children Board BSCB plays a vital role in helping protect children who are privately fostered, exercising leadership and raising awareness of the requirements and issues around Private Fostering.

**3.2** Bromley's Statement of Purpose for Private Fostering is reviewed annually alongside this annual report, in line with requirements under the National Minimum Standard (NMS) for Private Fostering. The Local Authority's Statement of Purpose regarding Private Fostering sets out: the notification requirements; the Local Authority's duties and functions under the Children Act 1989, 2004 and the Children (Private Arrangement for Fostering) Regulations 2005; as well as the role of all professionals and agencies in Bromley and the arrangements of training for relevant staff and professionals.

**3.3** This document will be made available to partner agencies, along with other Private Fostering publicity information, and will be published on Bromley's website.

### **4. Notification Arrangements**

**4.1** As at 1st of April 2018, the proposed change in the Private Fostering process was fully implemented. The previous process of notifications included all notifications going through the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Service, with the Referral and Assessment Service then carrying out the Regulation 7, 8 visits, and Regulation 4 assessments until the case was transferred to Private Fostering Lead. Although Notifications have continued to go through the MASH and since the 1 April 2018 however Notifications also come directly to the Private fostering

Lead and MASH have been liaising directly with the Private Fostering Lead officer as opposed to Referral and Assessment Service. This means the Regulation 4, 7 and 8 have now been carried out and completed by the lead officer for private fostering. Addressing the issues of drift and delay and adding consistency of social worker to the children and young people in these arrangements. The lead officer will continue to support the child and their family if there are no safeguarding concerns identified. Private fostering arrangements, where safeguarding concerns are identified will continue to be transferred to the Safeguarding and Care Planning Team to Action a Plan for the child.

**4.2.** As we transitioned into this new model, thus far, we have already observed that it has provided consistency and reduced both the risk of drift and the number of social workers involved with each family which is in line with the Bromley Relationship Model (BRM).

The benefits of this model:

- It has lessened the number of professionals the child is involved with. Whilst before making this transition a child would have been involved with two or more different social workers within a short period of time. They are now benefiting from continuity of social worker and service area.
- It appears to have streamlined the assessment process and reduced potential delays in following an action plan for the child and their family.
- It has freed time for social workers in Referral and Assessment front teams by reducing the caseload for practitioners, in line with Bromley's current Road Map to Excellence.
- Responsibility and accountability is clear and transparent.
- Regulation 7 and 8 visits have been completed within timescales.

**4.3** The lead officer has continued to ensure that the Local Authority's Private Fostering policies and procedures are in line with statutory requirements and national guidance.

The lead officer has continued to present Private Fostering training for professionals working with children and families as Mandatory Training via Learning and Development as well as presentations to various team meetings across children services, Bromley NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Bromley School Admission, International schools, Private Schools,

Faith groups and the lead officer has attended the BSCB Conference for Vulnerable Adolescents as well as Primary School and Secondary School transition forum.

In the 2017/18 report, we informed that our Aim was to make Private Fostering Training part of Learning & Development Mandatory Training for social workers and other children Safeguarding officers in Bromley. We are pleased to report that we have achieved this and as at 01/04/2019 Private Fostering Training is now part of the Safeguarding Mandatory Training. Since then, we have seen an increase in the number of professionals attending Private Fostering training; professionals have included; social workers, SENCOs, Safeguarding officers, Head teachers, practice nurses, school nurses, support workers as well as medical professionals from hospitals. It was also part of our Action Plan to include Private Fostering as part of the Bromley Induction Program for new social workers. This is currently being implemented by Team managers who refer new social workers to have a briefing on Private Fostering with the lead officer. It is positive that Private Fostering Training is now recognised as part of mandatory safeguarding training for social workers and other children safeguarding officers in Bromley, we know this will increase awareness.

## **5. Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare**

**5.1** As mentioned above, as from 1 April 2018 we have streamlined the process; although the notifications will continue to go through MASH, cases are now transferred directly to Private Fostering as opposed to Referral and Assessment Service. Consultation between the MASH team and lead officer will form part of the notification process. MASH will process any case that has clear safeguarding concerns to RAS. Where the notification have been deemed a private fostering arrangement then regulation 7, 4 and 8 are completed by the lead officer for private fostering. The Group Manager for Fostering now signs off all Private Fostering arrangements when assessed to be suitable. Any arrangements that do not meet this threshold are pursued via the formal safeguarding route under the remit of the Safeguarding and Care Planning Service. If at any time in the arrangement, safeguarding concerns arise or identified, a review of the Private Fostering Arrangement (PFA) will be completed and will be escalated and pursued via the usual safeguarding protocol.

**5.2.** In the 2017/2018 annual report we reported that there had been a slight improvement in the transfer protocol from Private Fostering to Safeguarding, we are pleased to inform that this process continues to improve. We have jointed work on 4 cases with Safeguarding and Care Planning Team which we had assessed to be Children in Need. As well as two cases with Disabilities Children Service and after successfully working together on the two Children in Need cases, the cases were transferred back to Private Fostering, we continue to have case discussions around the private fostering arrangement in two of the other cases. These will continue to be children in Need cases until the children have achieved permanence via a Special Guardianship Orders (SGO).

## **6. Practice Development**

### **Nationally:**

**6.1** The British Association for Adoption and Fostering (CORAMBAAF) continues to facilitate a special interest group for Private Fostering. The Lead Officer for Private Fostering attends this special interest group. However due to funding, the meetings have been reduced, from quarterly to biannually. It remains the lead officer's view that these forums have enabled local policy and practice development in line with best practice from other authorities.

**6.2** Members of the group include; CORAMBAAF, Local Authority representatives with interest in Private Fostering matters, direct or indirect representation from the Department of Education (DfE), National society for the prevention of cruelty to children (NSPCC) and member agencies with personal experience of Private Fostering. The Lead Officer has continued to benefit through case consultation with the Private Fostering Interest Group Coordinator. We also benefit from the relevant research findings, legal advice, good practice guidance and up-to-date materials in relation to Private Fostering which is shared during these forums.

### **Regional Development**

**6.3** In the 2017/18 report we highlighted that Awareness Raising continues to be a challenge nationally, and in recognition of this, the lead officer had coordinated a Regional Networking Group for Private Fostering with other lead officers from across the London Boroughs and County councils in the Southeast of England. We are pleased to report that the Networking group has



continued to grow and develop, it now has over 12 members across Southeast England and we aim to continue to increase membership. Membership includes the following Local Authorities, Royal Borough of Greenwich, Lewisham, Croydon, Lambeth, Baxley, Hertfordshire, Newham, Kent, Medway, Thurrock, Barking and Dagenham Hillingdon, Richmond and Wandsworth.

**6.4** The Private Fostering Week continues to be an important part of our annual calendar of events. It was originally established in 2010/11 when the government funded the British Association for Adoption and Fostering to establish and facilitate an awareness raising campaign. The British Association for Adoption have not received any funding to support and promote this significant event in the Private Fostering annual calendar and as a result of continuing challenges to their resources, they have decided that they can no longer initiate Private Fostering Week. The lead officer took the initiative through the Regional Networking group to propose to the Group that the 2018 PF Week commenced the week beginning 08/07/2018. This was for us to have a coordinated awareness raising campaign with our statistical and geographical neighbors throughout that week. The majority of the members in the Networking group agreed therefore we rolled out coordinated events with our statistical and geographical neighbors. We have also agreed that moving forward we should consider every second week of July as our Private Fostering Week. We aim to increase coordinated awareness raising campaigns during this significant date on the PF calendar.

#### **Locally:**

**6.5** The Private Fostering Lead Officer has continued to work closely with both internal and external agencies in raising awareness about Private Fostering and in safeguarding and ensuring the wellbeing of privately fostered children. The lead officer has continued to work closely with our partner agencies, Health, Education, Law Enforcement, Environment, Housing, Faith and Religious groups etc. What has been significant this year has been the noticeable increase in Notifications from Bromley School Admission. This was following PF presentations and meetings with the Bromley School Admissions management team to find the best ways to include Private Fostering in the School Admissions processes. We also continued to work closely with language schools, international colleges, GP Surgeries, Schools, NHS Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) etc. Information in the form of electronic posters, banners and leaflets regarding

Private Fostering are regularly distributed to schools, libraries, GP surgeries, residents associations and faith groups (Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples) in Bromley, outlining the definition of Private Fostering and the legal duties to notify the Local Authority, of any known Private Fostering arrangements with the London borough of Bromley.

In this financial year, we are delighted to inform you that since the launch of the Bromley Private Fostering APP we have had 2945 downloads. Our aim continues to be for every social worker in Bromley to have the APP on their work mobile and encourage all professionals working with children and families to also have the APP on their mobile phones. We continue to update and adapt innovative ideas in the booklets that we developed for professionals as well as the Welcome packs for children, young people, carers, and parents so that they are easy to understand and user friendly.

We remain resolute in raising Private Fostering Awareness using different mediums, including articles about PF featured in newsletters, circulars including Bromley spotlight. In addition we have liaised with Bromley Environment services/Parking to support us put our posters around Bromley Car Parks. We have received positive feedback as we have seen an increase in notifications even though most of them have not resulted in Private Fostering Arrangements.

**6.6** In October 2018 the Lead Officer attended and presented Private Fostering at the Bromley (CCG) Safeguarding Health Forum where representatives from different service areas within the NHS attended. Networking with lead professionals from the different service areas helped to increase awareness within the professionals' service area. On the 20<sup>th</sup> November the lead officer attended BSCB Conference for Vulnerable Adolescents where posters and leaflets were distributed and information shared and exchanged with safeguarding officers from across the borough.

**6.6** The Lead Officer provided training on 09.05.2018, 06.06.2018, 06.07.2018, 06.07.2018 14.09.2018, 20.09.2018, 14.11.2018, 30.01.2019 and 27.03.2019 for professionals including, school safeguarding officers, head teachers, social workers, support workers, Practice nurses school nurses, Health visitors and other health professionals. The training covered current legislation, guidance, regulations, case studies and Serious Case Reviews/Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. The lead officer continued to offer on-going refresher training in teams across

children services. Private Fostering Training is now mandatory for all social workers joining Bromley as part of their induction across children Services. This has been coordinated between the lead officer and Learning and Development until 01/04/2019 when PF training was included as mandatory safeguarding training. This has ensured that all new employees are informed of the current practice, legislation and critical debates in Private Fostering.

**6.7** We have also been raising awareness by sending messages via twitter through the Bromley Corporate page. Bromley's website is up-dated regularly to ensure it is more streamlined. The majority of 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 the utilizing all the Television monitors within the Civic Centre and with our partner agencies. We are aware that this has become the most effective and efficient way to capture our target audience.

## **7. Raising Awareness about Private Fostering**

**7.1** The Children Act 2004 includes a paragraph (7A) in Schedule 8 of the Children Act 1989, which places a duty on local authorities to promote Private Fostering public awareness in their area of the notification requirements.

**7.2** It is a legal requirement to promote public awareness however it continues to be concerning, that 91 per cent of the UK adult population do not know what Private Fostering is, this accords with the research commissioned by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (CORAMBAAF 2015).

As mentioned above The Private Fostering Regional Network group continues to grow since Bromley championed its formation in July 2018, 12 lead professionals have now joined the networking group and there has been expression of interest from various London Boroughs and county councils across South East England. The meetings are run quarterly and attendance has included senior managers, a barrister and experts working with children who have been trafficked and exploited to give advice guidance and current practice developments. This has been a very helpful and supportive forum for reflection and to critically debate current and future themes in

private fostering. For example we are organising a Private Fostering Conference as part of joint awareness raising in the next financial year, where we will invite our partner agencies, including; Health, Education, Social Care, Housing, Law Enforcement, UK Border Agencies. This Networking group was formed so that lead officers can work together, exchange ideas and support each other in case management, raising awareness, share good practice and work towards bringing uniformity to forms used for Regulation 4 assessments and regulation 8 visits. It is important that we as lead professionals have a coordinated awareness campaign across boroughs and county councils. We strongly believe this is a more effective and efficient way to raising awareness. This was demonstrated during the 2018 private fostering week where 6 members joined us to raise awareness during the same week in July, agreeing on how we implemented the awareness campaign, this has aided innovative ways to raise awareness which we had not accomplished in the previous years.

**7.3** Bromley recognises the importance of promoting Private Fostering Public Awareness in planned and coordinated ways as well as applying digital innovation. Outcomes of these activities in the past have made little difference in terms of increasing notifications and we were aware that the most effective raising awareness campaigns focus primarily on the council's own staff, GPs, school admissions and language colleges as well as Faith and religious groups. During this financial year, through the implementation of our coordinated approach we have noticed a significant growth in our Notifications.

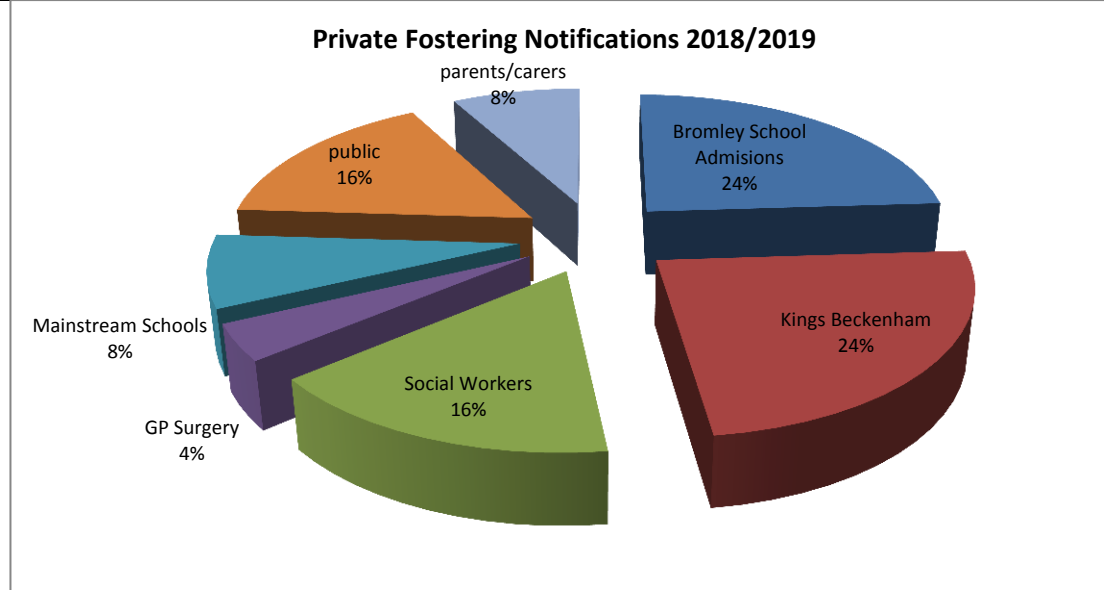
**7.4** Since 1st April 2018 when the process for PF was streamlined, so that the entire process is managed under Fostering, we are now in a better position to oversee the notification process and can now record more accurately as the notification comes to Private Fostering and MASH. However we have agreed that notifications received by both MASH and PF are shared between the two teams and PF is responsible for recording all notifications. Please see the new flow chart on Appendix 2. It is encouraging that since the 1 April 2018 we have received 25 notifications from social workers, schools, carers and parents.

**7.5** The data from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 show that we received 25 Notifications for Private fostering arrangements which resulted in 18 new cases. 6 Notifications were from Bromley School Admissions, 6 notifications came from Kings Beckenham for international students from

Asia, 4 from social workers within Children services following PF presentation in team meetings. 6 notifications were from members of the public, 2 notifications were received from mainstream schools, and 1 notification from GP/Practice Surgery.

### Referrals and Notifications

Bromley School Admissions	6
Kings School in Beckenham	6
Social Workers	4
GP Surgery	1
Mainstream Schools	2
Members of the Public	4
Parents/carers	2
<b>Total Notifications</b>	<b><u>25</u></b>



We had a total of 18 new Private Fostering cases bringing the total number of private fostering arrangements to 28 as at 31/03/2019. This is a significant increase compared to 10 cases in the last financial year and a record increase in the past 10 years. What continues to be significant is that professionals, who were unrelated to language schools, referred a large number of these notifications.

Although it is encouraging that the number of notifications have increased however we had hoped that we would see an increase in notifications from our partners from Health, such as; GP surgeries, A&E and community health services. We are also concerned that we have not had any

referrals from Law enforcement agencies such as; the police and national boarder agencies. We are therefore aware that there is still more work to do and Bromley will continue to build on these campaigns in the coming year.

In the 2017/18 financial year we reported that we did not have an effective way of recording Notifications, where all referrals where made through MASH and RAS could only record cases that had gone to full assessment at the same time MASH uses a different system to the rest of Children Services therefore data capture for notifications was missed. Only notifications that became full assessments and private fostering arrangements were the ones that were recorded which were cases not notifications. We are pleased to report that as at 01/04/2018 when Private Fostering took full control, we have taken measures to mitigate this challenge until the New ICS is launched. We have created a New Spreadsheet System were we record all Notifications and have started recording notifications separately. I can confirm that as at 03/05/2018, we received and recorded six notifications from social workers, parents and schools. This was a significant number of notifications in less than 6 weeks, it is also interesting that the notifications were coming from various sources including internally from social workers.

**7.6** Bromley has this year undertaken the following strategies to raise awareness:

- 1) The lead officer has increased the number of Training Sessions, providing in-depth training and advice to the children's workforce practitioners especially that Bromley is increasingly becoming an academy. We have seen an increased number of social work students and students in Assessed and Supported Year in Employment ( ASYE) which increased demand for Training.
- 2) We have continued to develop our database of organisations in the borough including Churches, Mosques, Community centres, Housing Associations, Cultural Organisations, schools, GP surgeries, Children Centres and Public Libraries. Letters, circulars, posters, leaflets and booklets have been disseminated manually and electronically, highlighting the need to notify the LA of any Private Fostering arrangements they may be aware of.
- 3) All educational establishments in Bromley including Early Year's provisions were consistently updated and awareness raising material replenished especially in all the family centres. We have ensured that PF articles are in the School Circular from the local authority's education department

emphasising the need for schools to notifying the local authority about any Private Fostering arrangements they are aware of.

4) The lead officer has continued to raise awareness through the internal newsletters; Permanence service newsletter, In Touch, Spotlight, School Circulars and the BSCB newsletter. These publications and newsletters have been useful in disseminating messages and reaching a wider audience.

5) In June 2018, the Lead Officer attended the School Transition forum where Primary and Secondary schools meet to discuss about the children's transition from Primary to Secondary school. This forum is attended by most school in Bromley therefore it is an opportunity to raise awareness with school safeguarding officers, SENCOs and head teachers. We have also promoted Private Fostering awareness by attending various meetings with different organisations and partner agencies.

**7.7** The Bromley Safeguarding Children's Board (BSCB) continues to provide a leadership role in Private Fostering. The board has contributed to raising awareness through their internal newsletters and conferences as well as supporting the Lead Officer with upcoming events which are relevant to safeguarding children, i.e. the lead officer attended the safeguarding conference for Vulnerable Adolescents on 20/11/2018 and on the 24/10/2018 the officer presented Private Fostering at the Safeguarding Health Forum where representatives from different health services meet to discuss safeguarding issues in their areas.

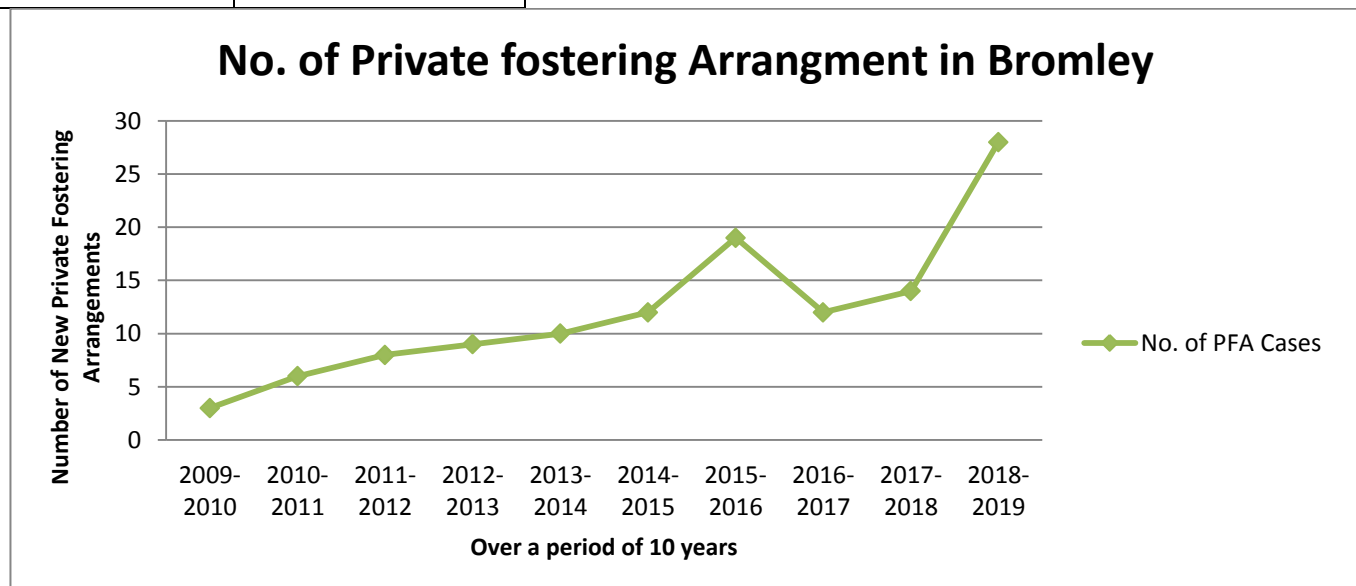
**7.8** Private Fostering Website has been updated in line with the Bromley Corporate Website changes and it can be accessed via this link

[https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/159/fostering/990/private\\_fostering](https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/159/fostering/990/private_fostering)

## 8. Outcomes for children in Private Fostering arrangements.

### Graphic analysis of Cases

Year	No. of PFA Cases
2010- 2011	6
2011- 2012	8
2012- 2013	9
2013- 2014	10
2014- 2015	12
2015- 2016	19
2016- 2017	12
2017- 2018	14
2018- 2019	28



**8.1** The chart above provides a summary of figures showing key Private Fostering Arrangements not notifications in Bromley over the last 10 years. The figures point an upward trajectory over the



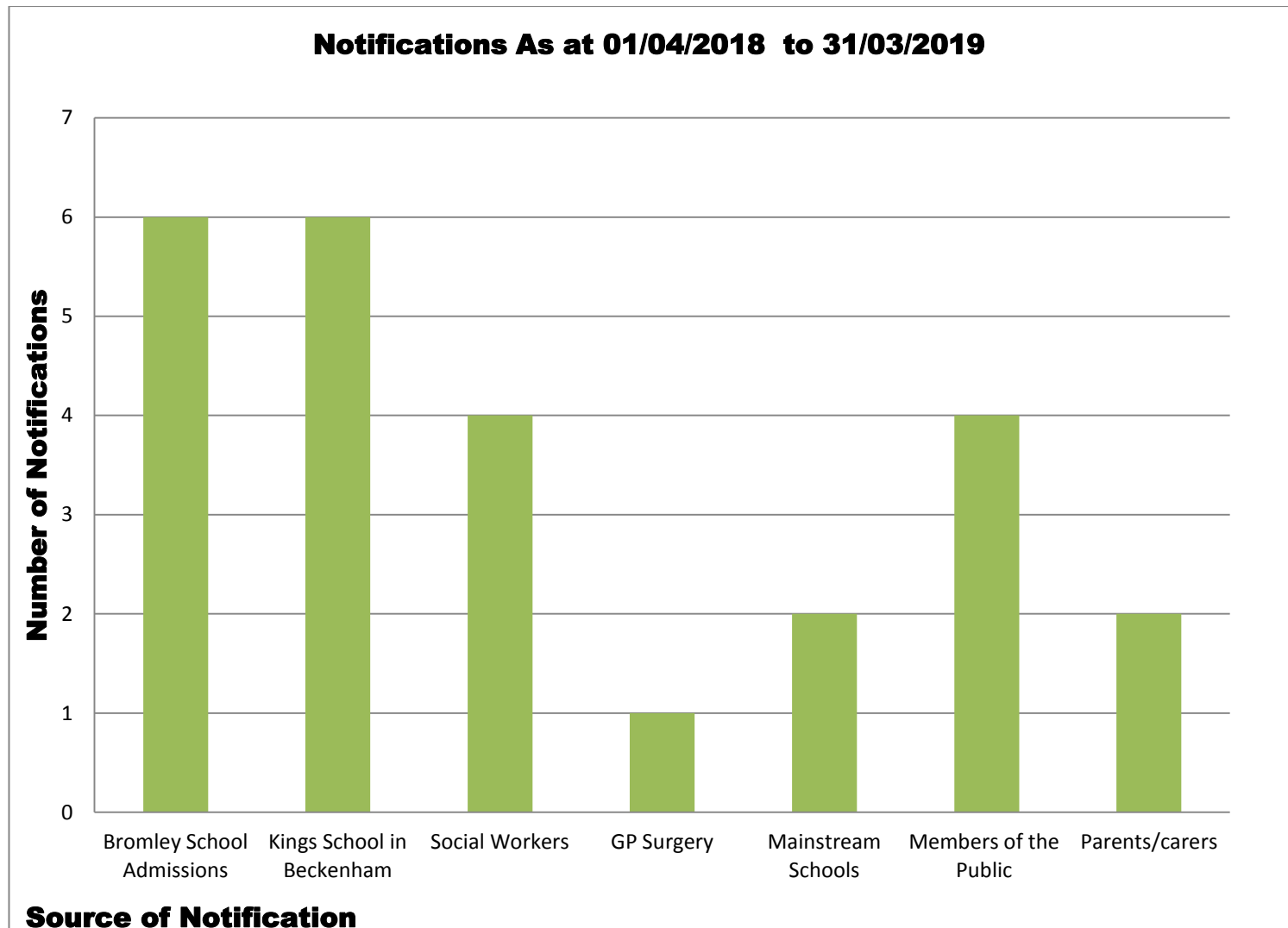
past 10 years. In the last 3 years we have seen a continuous upsurge of cases and in this reporting year we have had 28 private fostering arrangements, a 50 percent increase in the number of cases which is a record level in 10 years and higher rate of PFA compared to our statistical and geographical neighbours.

**8.2** The lead officer with the support of senior management has adapted and implemented innovative techniques to raise awareness about Private Fostering in Bromley. This includes; digital innovation, i.e. the Private Fostering APP, use of electronic leaflets, posters, and banners in order to reach a wider audience. As well as working together with our partnership agencies, including language and international schools, presentations and presence at key safeguarding events, networking with other local authorities and county councils to arrange coordinated awareness raising campaign with our statistical and geographical neighbours.

**8.3** It is also a demonstration that the different changes that were implemented within the last financial year; i.e. making the Private fostering post a full time post and the subsequent change in the Private Fostering processes has contributed to this positive upturn. It is the lead officer's view that this has allowed capacity for the lead officer to concentrate on planning, developing processes, change implementation and relationship building with children, young people, parents, carers and their families. This is evidenced by this year's figures, which have increased from 14 in 2017/2018 to 28 in the 2018/2019 financial year; this is an increase of 50 percent which is the highest growth rate compared to our geographical and statistical neighbors. However the lead officer is aware that thousands of children being cared for under private fostering arrangements are unaccounted for.

It is estimated that there are 8 000 children from overseas are living with somebody in England and Wales and Bromley is not unique. We are aware that there are more private fostering arrangements which have not been brought to the attention of the local authority and we will continue to work with our partner agencies to tackle this challenge. Never the less we are encouraged not just by the number of private fostering arrangements but also by the level of notifications.

The bar graph and pie chart on page 17 represents the source of referrals; of the 25 notifications received in the last year, 6 from International/language schools, 6 Bromley School Admission, 4 social care, 4 from members of the public, 2 from mainstream schools, 2 from carers and 1 from GP Surgery.



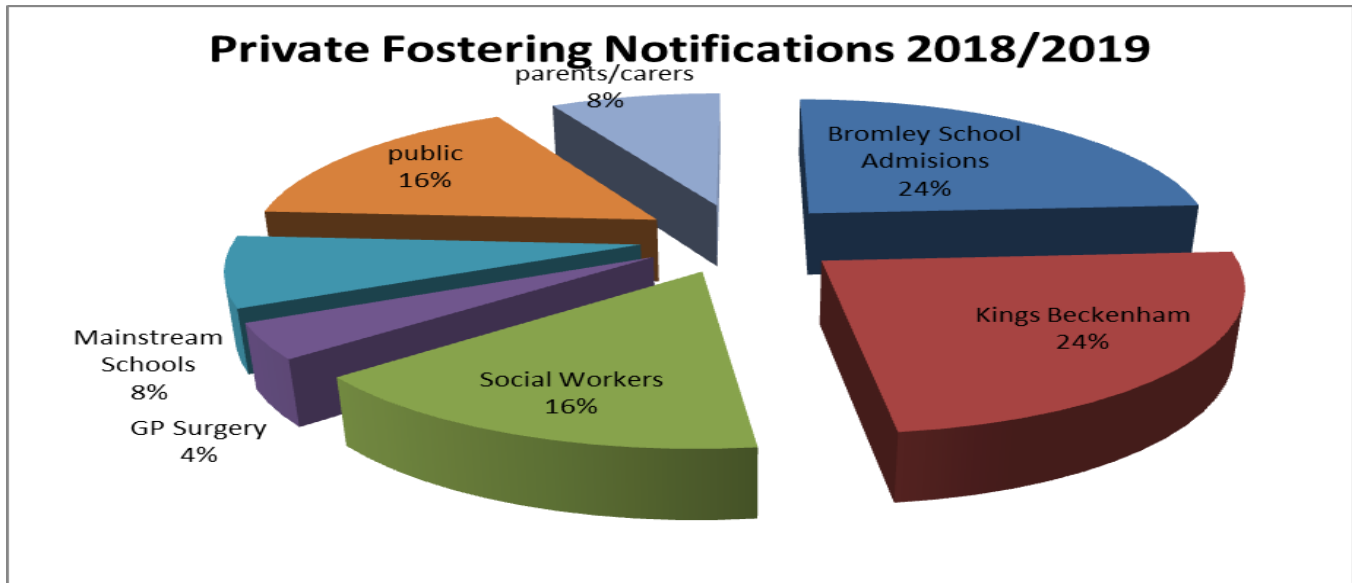
What is significant in the notifications is that for the first time we have received notifications from Bromley School Admissions and Social Workers. This was largely due to the work that was carried out by the lead officer with Bromley School Admissions and presentations for practitioners across children services.

Although the number of notifications received from members of the public remains significantly low however it is positive that we are receiving notifications directly from members of the public. This demonstrates that our awareness raising targeted at members of the public appear to be working especially that we have focused on the support element rather than the legal obligation to notify the local authority.

What is mostly disappointing is the very low number of notifications that we received from Health despite the efforts high levels of work that has been carried out with our partners from Health. Only 1 notification was received from a GP surgery, which paints a very worrying picture. We know that privately fostered children will need to be registered with a GP surgery at a point, or visit Accident & Emergency or any of the Allied Services. I know we should be getting more referrals from our partners from Health. What is more concerning for me is that, it is not only our Health partners with such a worrying picture but other agencies such as Law enforcement, Housing, Faith groups, Charities etc.

Strategies for targeted awareness raising will be part of our action Plan for the next financial year with the aim to increase awareness within these agencies.

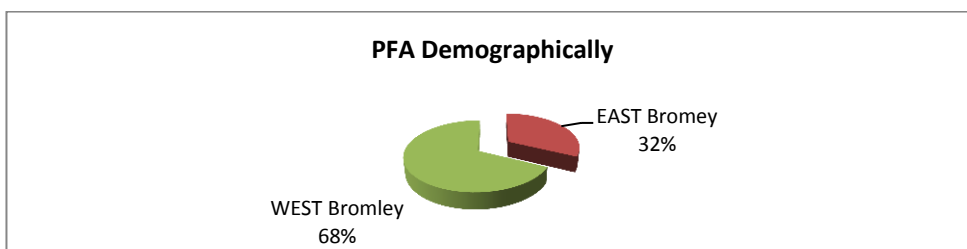
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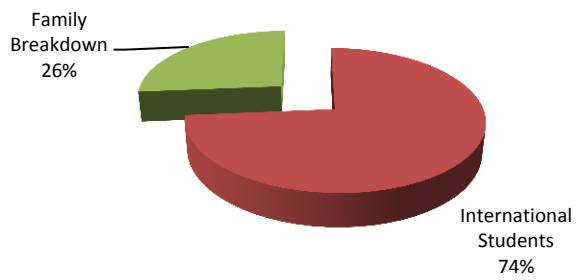
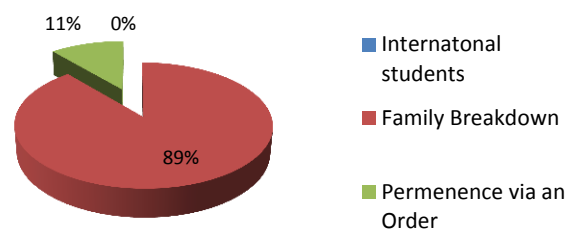


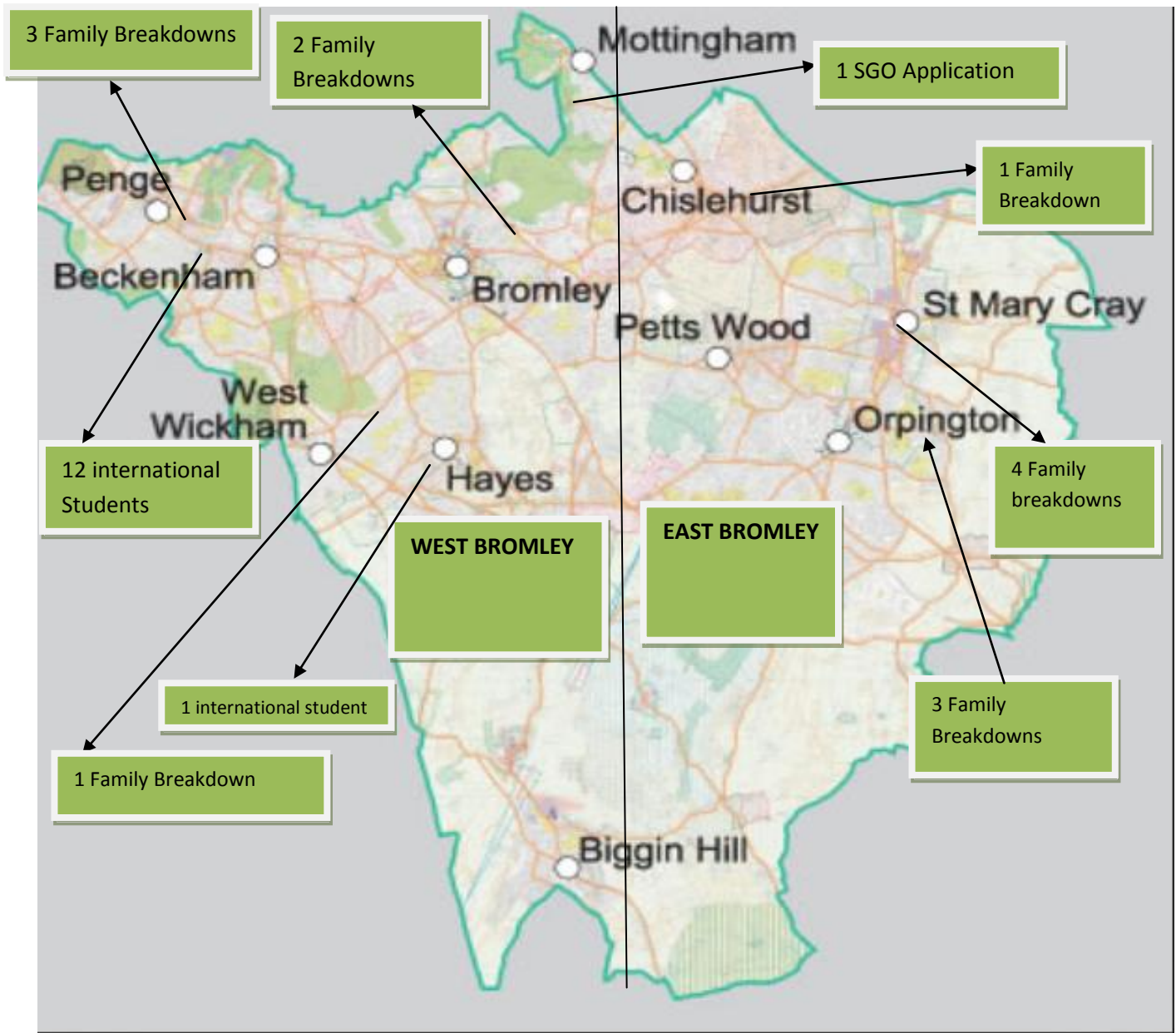
### Demographic trends in Bromley's privately fostered children

The diagrams below represent Bromley demographic trends and the reasons for PFA referrals in the last financial year. Significantly 50 percent of private fostering arrangements are due to family relationship breakdown, compared to 46 percent for international students from Asia, Africa and EU.

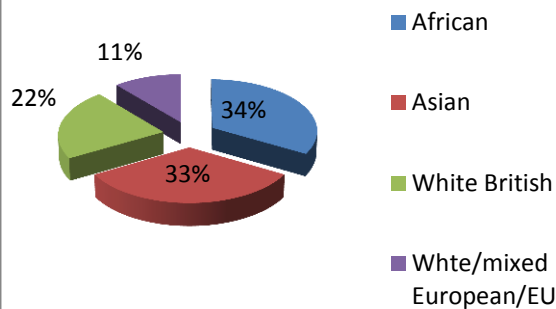
The trends indicate that 68 percent of the Private Fostering Arrangements were from the West side of the borough and 32 percent from the Eastside of the borough. Of the 68 percent from the Eastside, 74 percent of the private fostering arrangements were international students in host families, accessing UK Education, 26 percent of the private fostering arrangements were due to family and relationship breakdowns. Compare this with 32 percent private fostering arrangements from the Eastside of the borough, were 89 percent of the private fostering arrangements were due to family and relationship breakdowns.



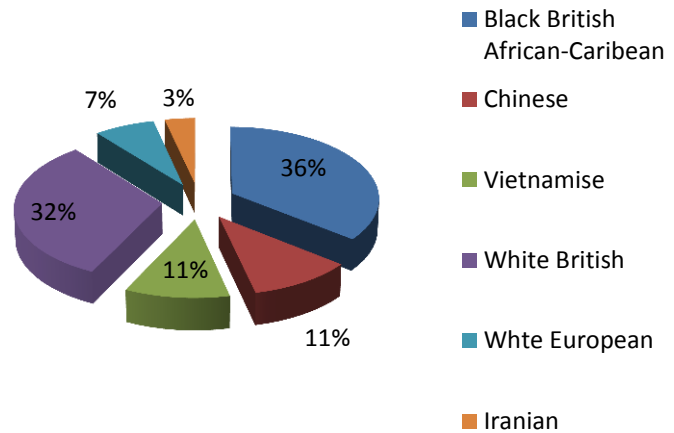
**West Bromley Reasons for PFA****East Bromley Reasons for PFA**



### Number of PFA according to Ethnicity 2017-2018



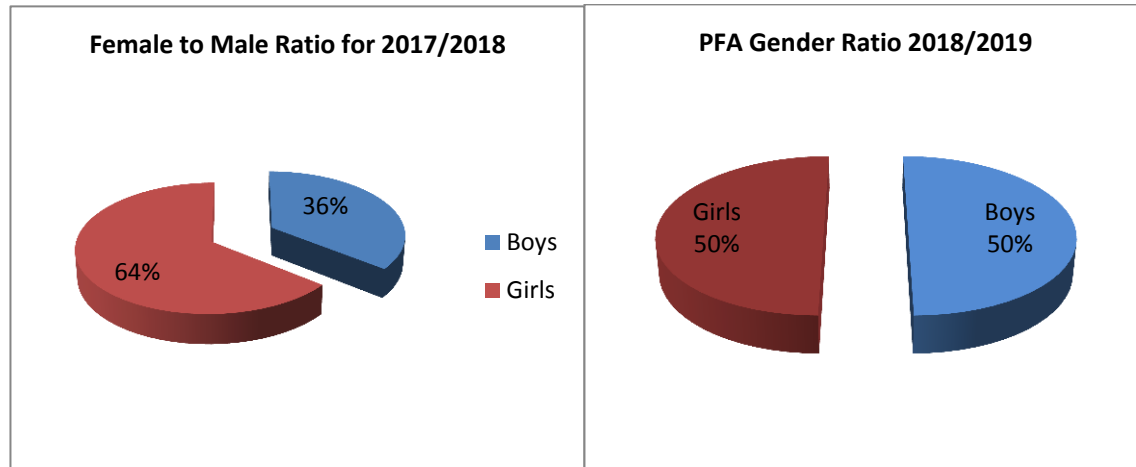
### Number of PFA according to Ethnicity in 2018-2019



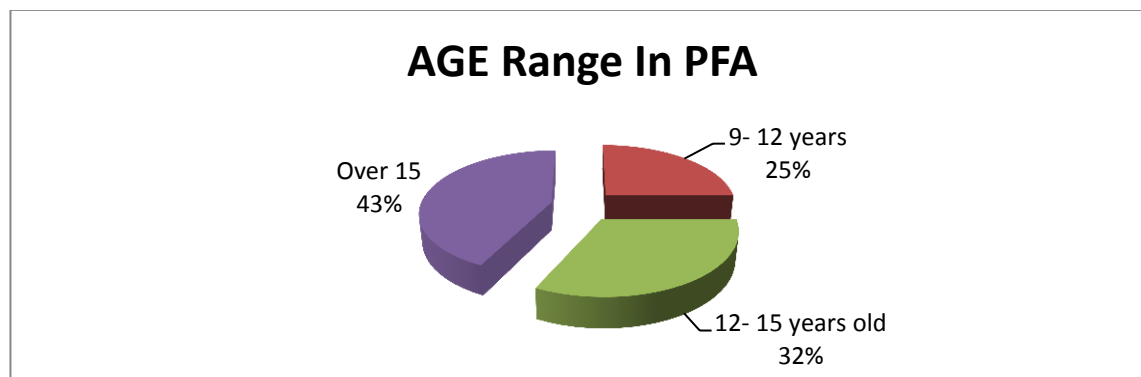
**8.4** Out of the 18 new Private fostering arrangements in this financial year, 36 percent of the children were classified as Black/British- African, 32 percent white British, 22 percent Asian (11 percent Chinese, 11 percent Vietnamese international students) 7 percent European international students from within EU and 3 percent from the Middle east.

9.4 Bromley has continued to develop the Private Fostering communication plan, forming new relationships with other professionals to widen the impact of raising awareness activities, including inter-borough networking, NHS CCG, Early Intervention and language schools. As we reported in the 2018 financial year we have continued to collate PF figures from our geographical and statistical neighbours in order to analyse and build on the effectiveness of our campaigns.

**(Please see Appendix 4)**

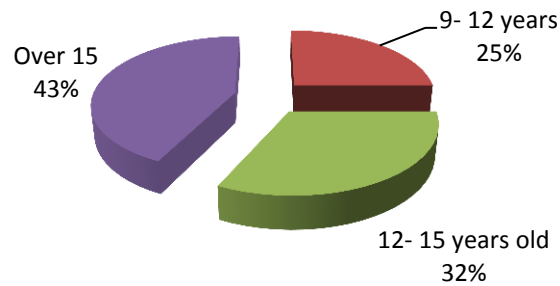
**Privately Fostered Children by Gender – in the Period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019**

**8.5** Out of the 28 private fostering arrangements, 14 were female and 14 were male. These figures inform us that there has not been any movement in the number of cases for girls but there was an increase in the number of cases for boys. It also informs us that overall, there was an uptrend in cases in 2018/2019.

**Age range of Privately Fostered children in Bromley as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018**

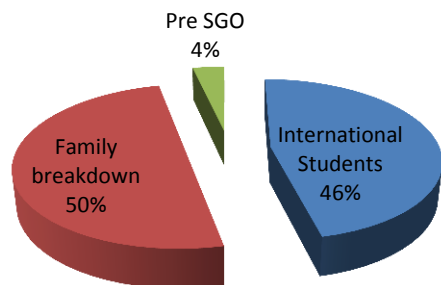


### AGE Range In PFA



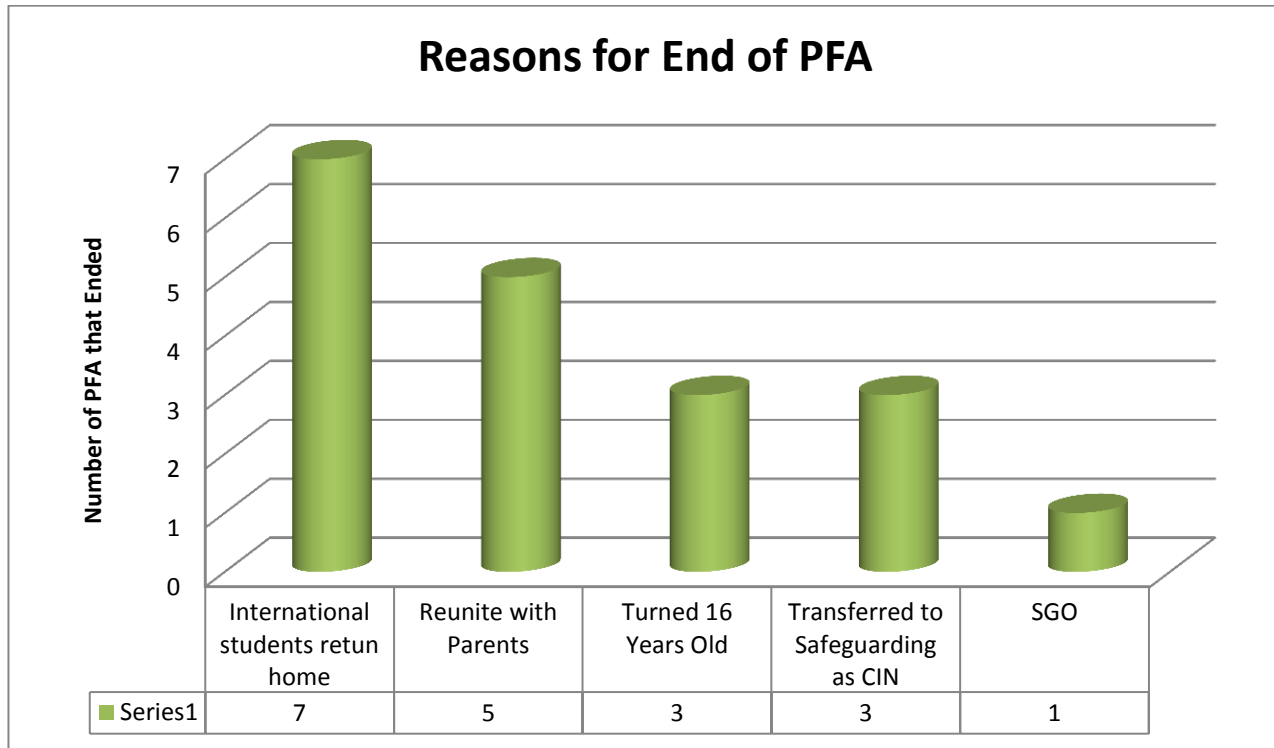
**8.6** This table demonstrates that as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, there were no children under the age of 10 years old subject to a Private Fostering arrangement. This is positive in that this is a very vulnerable age group who need more nurturing and the fact that we do not have any PFA for this age group is good. However 43 percent of the 28 children looked after under a private fostering arrangements were over the age of 15 years and 32 percent were between the ages of 12-15 and 25 percent were between 9 and 12 years old. There continue to be an increase in the number of teenagers being looked after under this arrangement which is consistent with the national PF trends for teenagers.

### Reasons for Private Fostering Arrangements



**Breakdown of Reasons for PFA**

In the 2018/2019 the number of referrals from non international students continued on an upwards trend, this was because of our awareness raising campaign as we continued to receive notifications from various sources.



#### 8.7 Out of the 19 Private Fostering arrangements that ended;

- a) Seven were international students who returned home following completion of one academic year studying GCSE and Pre A levels.
- b) Three children were transferred to the Safeguarding and Care Planning Team under a Child in Need Plan; the carer for two of the three children under a child in plan has made an application for a Special Guardianship Order. We have worked in partnership with our colleagues in Safeguarding in ensuring that permanence is achieved for the two children. The carer had made an application to the courts at the time of writing this report and we are waiting direction from the courts to complete the Special Guardianship Assessment.
- c) Five children were reunited with their birth parents, in some of the cases, restorative and reparative parenting work had to be completed, to support the carer and help the child rebuild relations with their family.

- d) Three turned 16 years old and the Private Fostering arrangement monitoring ended which accords with the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005.
- e) One child achieved permanence following positive SGO.

## **9. Advice and Support**

**9.1** The Lead Officer for Private Fostering ensures that private foster carers, parents and their children receive appropriate advice and support in all areas including advice on Welfare benefits, housing, education, health, access to training, respite, leisure and other activities.

**9.2** Where possible, the Lead Officer for Private Fostering will continue to offer support to private foster carers in matters of permanence, delegated authority or signpost them to appropriate Legal Services available, in relation to the children or young people subject to Private Fostering regulations.

**9.3** Private foster carers are offered support and receive appropriate information if they wish to seek a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Order. We currently have three carers seeking for SGOs. The 11 year old we reported in 2017/18, that the carer had received date of final hearing and the Judge had issued Directions to Bromley Children Services to complete the SGO assessment. We are delighted to report that The Special Guardianship Assessment was positive and the carer was granted an Interim Child Arrangement Order at a Hearing in February 2019 pending an assessment for financial support under S6 and S14 of The Special Guardianship Regulations 2005. The lead officer continued to be actively involved offering, advice and support to the carer with the process and is currently supporting other carers who have or are in the process of making an application for a special guardianship order. We recognise that in some instances, families may make their own arrangements for the care of a child or young person, however the best way to achieve permanence for some of our children and young people, which will allow them the opportunity to be brought up within their own families, we will encourage and enable them to do this in a way that is appropriate, focusing on achieving the best outcomes for children and young people in these arrangements.

**9.4** The Lead officer for Private Fostering continues to be available, accessible and approachable to offer support and advice to colleagues who require clarification on Private Fostering matters. In

this financial year we have noticed an increase in social workers from Referral and Assessment and Safeguarding Services seeking advice and guidance. We have also noticed an increase in enquiries from our partner agencies and members of the public.

**9.5** The Lead Officer has continually liaised with MASH and sought advice and support from the Safeguarding service and has escalated cases to child in need where thresholds were met.

## **10. The views of privately fostered children, their parents and carers**

**10.1** The Private Fostering service recognize and acknowledge that service improvement, development and innovation comes through listening to the voice of children, young people, carers, parents and the wider family. We are also aware that to achieve these we need to build positive relationships with our clients which involve the lead officer developing and sustaining supportive professional relationships in unique, complex and challenging situations. This is in line with the Bromley Relationship Based Model which recognizes that each social work encounter is unique. Effective relationships are central to successful outcomes, in recent years the concept of relationship-based practice (RBP) has become a way of articulating the centrality of the relationship between social workers and service users (Ruch, et al, (2010) Hennessey, (2011) Megele, (2015); Bryan et al, (2016).

Relationship Based Practice is at the heart of our Child/ Service User centred approach and gaining feedback from privately fostered children, their parents and carers continues to be at the heart of our practice. The lead officer has consistently encouraged privately fostered children, their carers and parents to give their feedback. We continue to be encouraged with the feedback that we received from children, carers and parents which demonstrates client satisfaction with our service delivery.

The following are examples of feedback from children, young people parents and carers;

***“The process was very easy to follow and received support from private fostering when we needed it.”***

***“Our social worker has always helped and given me information for anything that I need to know about the private fostering arrangement.”***

***“The social worker has been amazing and has always given me advice, help and support whenever I needed it and we have enjoyed working with him as a family.”***

***“I am grateful for the advice and support; we feel more sure knowing that a public service monitors our young child while they are studying in the UK” (parent from abroad)***

***One young person thanked the social worker, for getting them in a better place. i.e. supporting them with housing, education, restorative and reparative parenting work to rebuilt relationship with their parents.***

***Another young person responded to this scaling question as follows; “On a scale of 0 to 10, 0 being the worst service and 10 being the best service how would you rate the service you received from Bromley Private Fostering. She rated the service (9).***

Most international students expressed that they felt safer having someone in authority to check up on them. They also expressed that they had a good and positive relationship with their social worker.

One young person thanked the social worker for the support especially with tips on how to study effectively and knowing that he has someone from the authority who checks on his welfare. He expressed that this made him feel safe and valued. He even requested to stay in contact with the social worker even when the case had been closed. ***“I don’t mind if you come to see me once in a while, it will be really good just to keep in touch.”***

## 11. Monitoring Compliance with Duties and Functions

### Ofsted Inspection 2019

Ofsted reported that services in Bromley have improved dramatically over the past two years and the rapid improvement continues unabated, driven by the vision, commitment and determination of senior leaders. Private Fostering was part of this inspection and during the lead officer's discussions with Ofsted inspectors they commended on a number of things that they thought Bromley Private fostering service was doing better than our geographical and statistical neighbours, which included;

- our Raising Awareness Campaign
- the Private Fostering App
- the training we offered to professionals
- the relationship that we foster with our partner agencies, carers, and parents
- direct work with children and young people
- Good quality holistic assessments where the voice of the child, parent and carer is very clear and their views and feelings taken into consideration.
- Children are seen within statutory timescales
- Good focus on permanence for children in long term private fostering arrangements

It was no surprise to us that ofsted rated our leaders as 'outstanding' with outstanding impact on social work practice given the level of support that we received from them over the past two years. Although we are pleased with the commends that we received from ofsted, which assured us that we are on track, on our Road Map to Excellence, we are also aware that we can't get complacent as we still have a lot to do before we arrive to our destination on our journey towards excellency.

The reporting period performance assessed against previous return figures

**(Table 1)**

Indicators	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number of notifications of new Private Fostering arrangement received during the year	10	8	20	12	14	25
Number of cases where action was taken in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 4 (1) and 7 (1) for carrying out visits	10	8	20	9		18
Of these the number of cases where this action was taken within 7 working days of receipt of notification of the Private Fostering arrangement	8	6	15	5		18
Number of new arrangements that began during the year	10	8	19	12		
The number of Private Fostering arrangements that began <b>On or After</b> 1 April 2018 where visits were made at intervals of not more than 6 weeks	5	4	17	7		28
The Number of Private Fostering						

arrangements that began <b>BEFORE</b> 1st April 2018 that were continuing on 1st April 2019	3	8	4	6		
The number of Private Fostering arrangements that began before 1 April 2018 that were continuing on 1 April 2019 where scheduled visits were completed in the requested timescale	3	5	4	0		18
Number of Private Fostering arrangements that ended during the year	4	11	15	13		19
Number of children under Private Fostering arrangements as of 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	13	6	9	8		

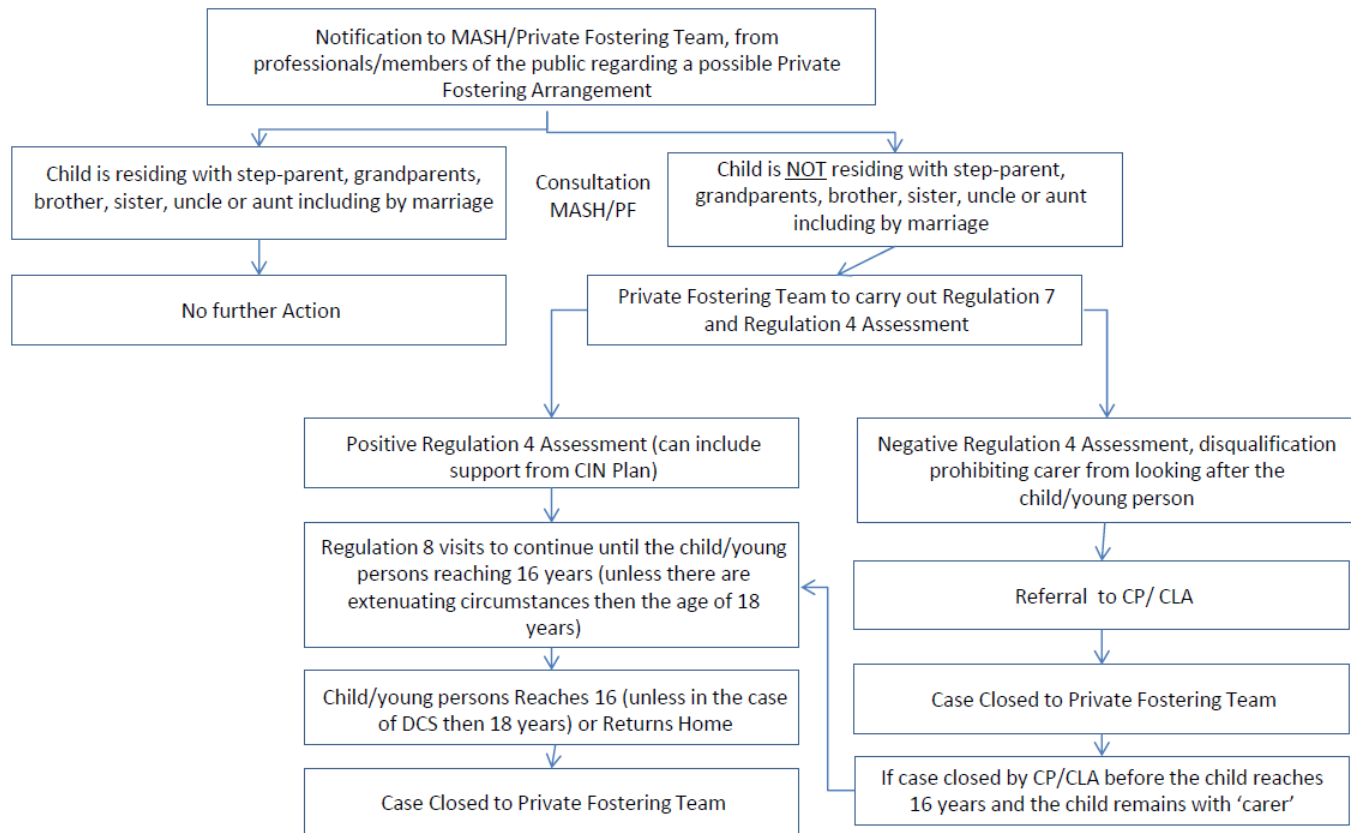
Report written by:

**Godwin Munzara**, Senior Practitioner Social Worker - Lead Officer for Private Fostering

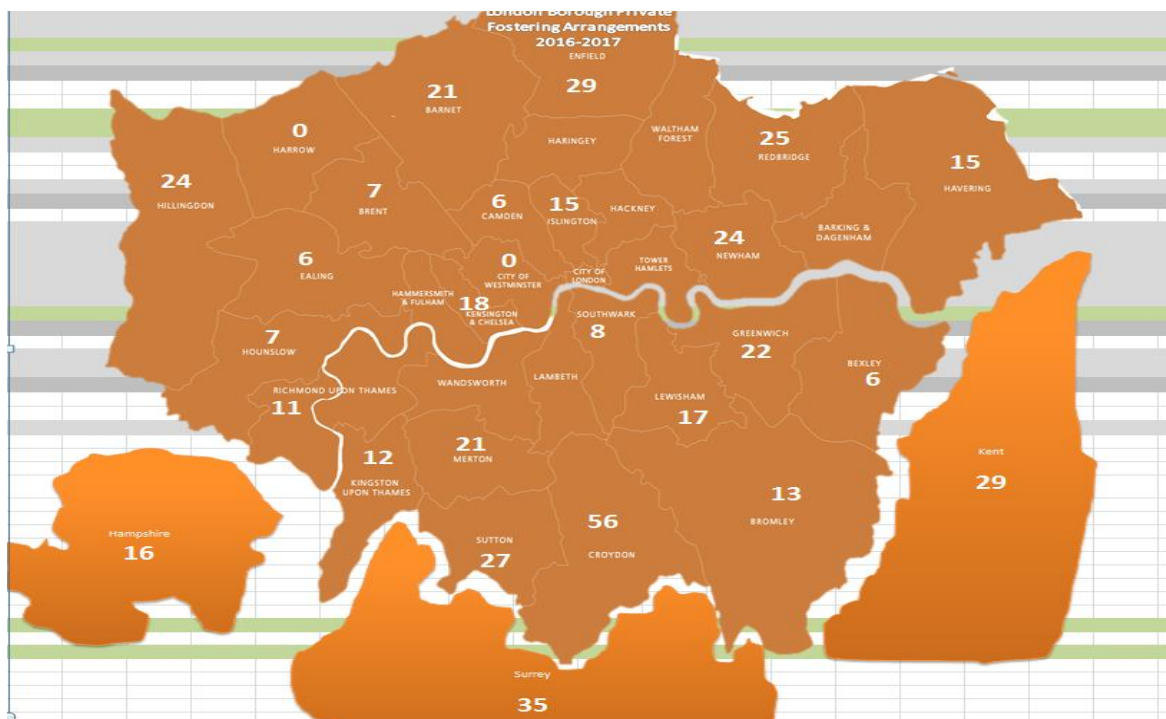
Date: **28.06.2019**



## Appendix 1 Private Fostering Flow Chart as at 01 April 2018



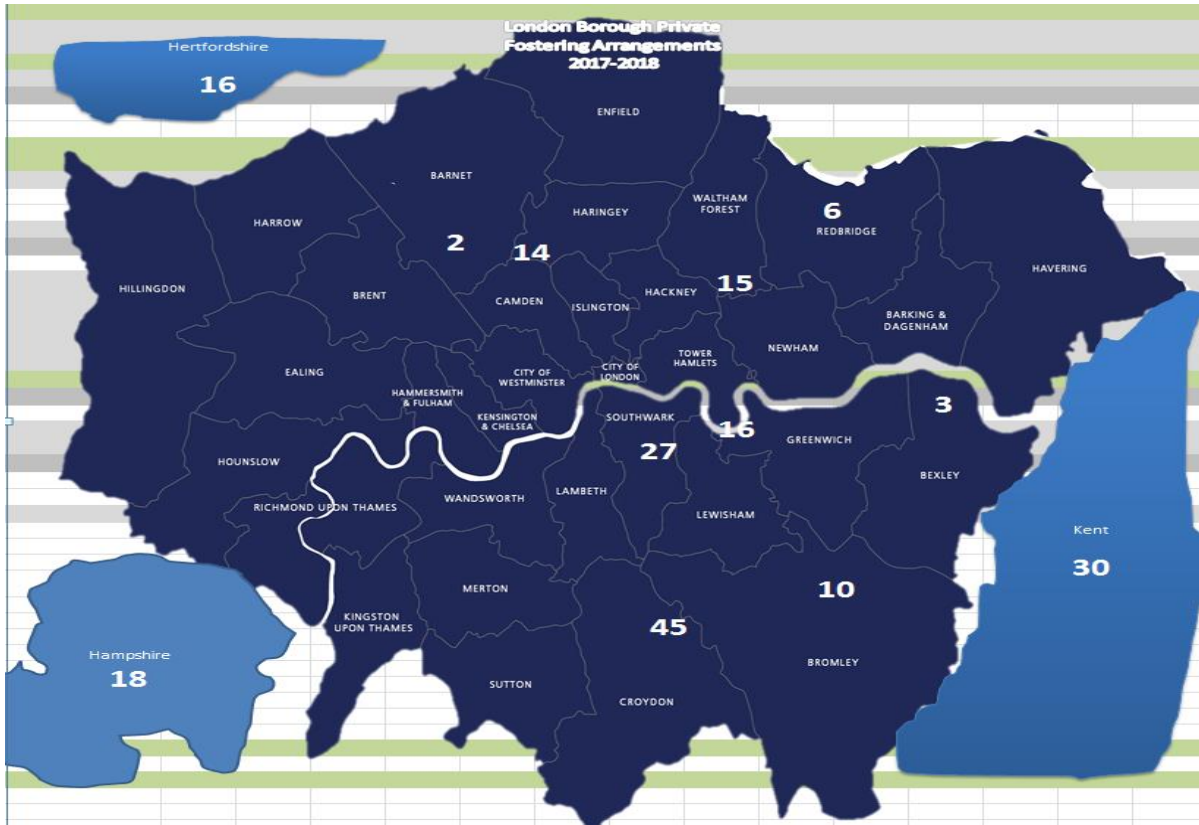
## Appendix 3 Private Fostering Arrangement across England and the Southeast April 2016-31/03/2017



## Appendix 3 continued

### PRIVATE FOSTERING STATISTICS IN SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

Private Fostering Flow Chart as at 01 April 2017



Appendix 3 continued

### PRIVATE FOSTERING STATISTICS IN SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

Private Fostering Flow Chart as at 01 April 2018

