

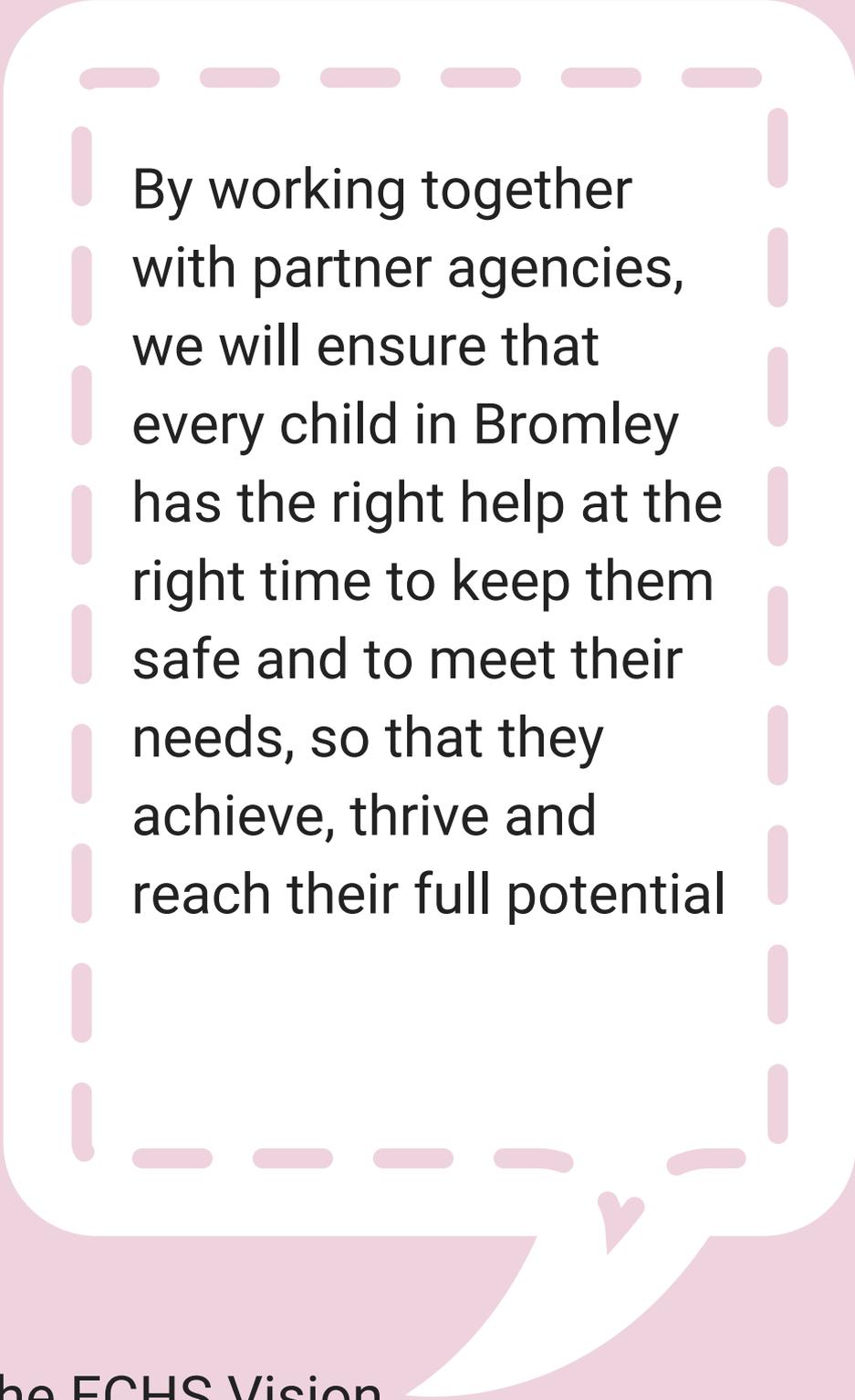


# Annual Private Fostering Report

2017-18



THE LONDON BOROUGH



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

The ECHS Vision

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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, aged under 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. 2017 to 31.03. 2018. 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 2017/2018.

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.

## **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 The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) received new enquiries and referrals regarding proposed or existing Private Fostering arrangements. The Referral and Assessment Service (RAS) then undertook the task of assessing the suitability of Private Fostering arrangements and initial welfare visits. Once the arrangements have been assessed as a safe Private Fostering arrangement, the duty of undertaking regular home visits and the provision of support and advice transfers to the Lead Officer for Private Fostering located within the Permanence Service in the Fostering team. The Lead Officer is Godwin Munzara, Senior Practitioner.

4.2 In the 2016/17 annual report, we proposed that we would be looking to streamline the process so that it becomes more effective and efficient. As stated above the process involved three different Services from Notification, Assessment and Monitoring Compliance to Support and Advice, this appeared to cause delay. It also meant that the child and their family had to work with three different social workers, usually for brief periods. As from the 1st April 2018 we have streamlined the process;

Although the notifications will continue to go through the MASH they will now transfer the cases directly to Private Fostering as opposed to Referral and Assessment Service. This means the regulation 7, 4 and 8 will now be carried out and completed by the lead officer for private fostering. Addressing many of 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.

4.3. As we are transitioning to this new model, we have already observed the following benefits:

- It has lessened the number of professionals the child is involved with. Before making these transition children would have been involved with two or more different social workers within a short period of time, they will benefit 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 line teams by reducing the caseload for practitioners, in line with Bromley's current Service Improvement journey.
- Responsibility and accountability is clear and transparent

4.4 In the year 2016 to 2017 annual report for Private Fostering, the Lead Officers for Private Fostering reported that they undertook developmental work, including reviewing Private Fostering forms on the new Computer Information System 'Eclipse'. We have continued to use the current forms on Carefirst and Carestore and will continue to do so until the new system is in place. 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 presented Private Fostering training for professionals via Learning and Development as well as presentations to various team meetings across children services, Bromley CCG and International schools, Private Schools and attended the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board Annual conference as well as SENCO forum. Our aim is to make Private Fostering Training part of Learning & Development mandatory training for social workers and other children Safeguarding officers in Bromley. It is also part of our Action Plan to propose making it mandatory for new social workers to Bromley to include Private Fostering as part of their induction.

## **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 the MASH, they will now transfer the cases directly to Private Fostering as opposed to the Referral and Assessment Service. Consultation between the MASH team and the lead officer will form part of the notification process. MASH will process any case that has clear safeguarding concerns to RAS. If the notification is deemed a private fostering arrangement then regulation 7, 4 and 8 will be completed by the lead officer for private fostering. The Group Manager for Fostering now signs off all Private Fostering arrangements when assessed to be safe. 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 PFA will be completed and will be escalated and pursued via the usual safeguarding routes.

5.2 An opportunity for learning to improve practice has been delayed following an audit that was carried out by Quality Assurance following the accommodation of two siblings by the local authority in 2017. One of the siblings suffered significant harm after sustaining extensive burns from boiling water. Although we are happy with the outcomes for the children who are thriving in foster care, we have not yet received any feedback following this Inquiry. We shall look to raise this further so that the results of the audit can be shared.

5.3 In the 2016/2017 report we reported that transferring cases from Private Fostering to Safeguarding and Care Planning came with its challenges due to gaps in the case transfer procedures. We can report that during this financial year there has been an improvement in this area. We jointly worked on a S47 Private fostering case with Referral and Assessment and this worked well, following disclosure at school from birth child of allegations of physical chastisement on the privately fostered child. A Joint Section 47 investigation was agreed and we completed a joint visit which involved interviewing the child with a social worker from RAS and a police officer from CAIT. Following the Section 47 investigation there was no evidence to suggest physical chastisement had been used and the case was closed to RAS. We allocated the case to a student for direct work to be completed as part of regulation 8 visits which was overseen by the Private

Fostering Officer. We have also successfully transferred two cases to the Safeguarding team as children in need and we continue to have case discussions around the private fostering arrangement.

## **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. It is the lead officer's view that these forums enable local policy and practice to develop 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 DfE, NSPCC and member agencies with personal experience of Private Fostering. The Lead Officer has benefited through case consultation with the Private Fostering Interest Group Coordinator. We also benefit from the relevant research findings, good practice guidance and up-to-date materials in relation to Private Fostering which is shared during these forums.

6.3 CORAMBAAF co-ordinates a national annual publicity campaign for Private Fostering. This provides an opportunity for raising awareness campaigns to be coordinated within local authorities. Bromley Council has participated in the local and national Private Fostering raising awareness campaign every July in line with the Local Authority's action plan. During the 2017/2018 period we took the opportunity to distribute our leaflets and posters to various GP surgeries and churches in Bromley, Biggin Hill, Orpington, Eltham, Mottingham, Central Bromley and the Penge areas. We met GP surgery practice managers, pastors, rabbis and priests and carried out a presentation on private fostering and how they can play a vital role in raising awareness as well as notifying the Local Authority of any private fostering arrangements.

### **Locally:**

6.4 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 build on the close working relationship with the School Admissions Team, language schools, international colleges, GP Surgeries, schools and the NHS Bromley CCG Team. As mentioned above information in the

form of posters and leaflets regarding Private Fostering are regularly distributed to schools, libraries, GP surgeries, residential 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.

The Following events and dates represent some of this year's highlights where the lead officer distributed awareness material:

- SENCO Forum on the 29/06/2017,
- Private Fostering awareness training on the 21/07/2017,
- Bromley Safeguarding Board Conference on the 15/11/2017,
- PF training on 20/11/2017,
- PF Presentation at ESAC forum, 07/12/2017
- Private fostering awareness training 29/02/2018,
- PF presentation at NHS Bromley CCG Next Steps Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing, Safeguarding and Care Planning Team presentation 26/02/2018,
- PF presentation RAS team meeting,
- CLA Team presentation 28/02/2018,
- PF training 13/03/2018,
- PF presentation Central Library 28/03/2018

In this financial year, we have developed and launched a Private fostering APP, which we have promoted to professionals across Children Services, our partner agencies in public places, including Bromley police stations. Our aim is for all social workers, safeguarding leads and any professionals working with children in the London Borough of Bromley to have the APP on their work mobile. However the current work mobile phones are not compatible with the Private Fostering APP. Therefore to address this, the lead officer during training and his presentations at team meetings, has encouraged all Bromley social workers, school safeguarding officers and other professionals working with children to download the APP on their personal mobile phones. We have proposed that the APP is installed on all the new mobile work phones for social workers, which will be rolled out in the next reporting year. We have also developed Information Resource

Welcome packs for carers, parents, children and young people, with essential information about support services including the complaint procedure. Please see Appendix 4, 5 and 6.

We have developed a booklet for professionals about private fostering which will be rolled out in July 2018 during the Private Fostering week. In addition, Private Fostering posters and the APP have featured in professional newspapers, newsletters, circulars including Bromley spotlight and Police life. In addition, we are advertising the Private Fostering APP on three different Petrol stations across Bromley.

6.5 On November 15, 2017, the Lead Officer attended the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board Conference, where posters and leaflets were distributed and information shared with safeguarding officers from across the borough.

6.6 The Lead Officer provided training on 21.07.2017, 20.11.2017, 29.01.2018, 06.06.2018 for professionals including, school safeguarding officers, social workers, teachers, support workers and professionals from health. The training covers current legislation, guidance, regulations and serious case reviews. Although the lead officer has continued to deliver presentations on Private Fostering in team meetings across children services, we aim to continue to offer on-going refresher training as well as making it mandatory for all social workers joining Bromley to attend Private Fostering training as part of their induction across children services. This will be coordinated together with the Learning and Development Team. This will ensure that any new employees are informed of the current practice, legislation and critical debates in Private Fostering.

6.7 National Minimum Standards (NMS) – The NMS Rolling Plan was reviewed in June 2017 to ensure that we are confident we are still providing services within the National Minimum Standards. The local authority's policies and procedures in relation to Private Fostering in Bromley continue to be developed and the Private Fostering Arrangement assessment forms will be integrated into the new information system 'Eclipse'.

6.8 We also raise awareness by sending messages via twitter via our communication department and we have been featured in the Bromley corporate pages. Bromley's website is updated regularly to ensure it is more streamlined. The majority of Private Fostering information as well as our APP and awareness campaigns can now be accessed online.

## 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, according to the research commissioned by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (CORAMBAAF 2015).

Bromley recognises that this remains a challenge nationally and to mitigate this, the lead officer has coordinated a networking group for Private Fostering with other lead officers from across the London Boroughs and County Councils in the Southeast of England. The networking group was established so that lead officers can work together, exchange ideas and support each other in 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 the Boroughs and County Councils. We strongly believe this is a more effective and efficient way to raising awareness.

7.3 Bromley recognises the importance of promoting public awareness about Private Fostering in planned and organised ways. Outcomes of these activities in the past have made little difference in terms of increasing notifications and we are aware that the most effective raising awareness campaigns focus primarily on the council's own staff, GP's, school admissions and language colleges.

7.4 The data from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 showed that the number of notifications received were 12, compared to 19 from the previous reporting year. The notifications received in the year 2017/2018 increased to 14. This is comparable to our statistical and geographical neighbours (See Appendix 3)

What is significant is that professionals who were unrelated to language schools referred a large number of these notifications. It is encouraging that the number of notifications have increased and that they have increased outside the language schools but we are aware that there is still more work to do and Bromley will continue to build on these campaigns in the coming year.

7.5 In the 2016/2017 annual report we stated that in order to fully meet the LA's duties and commitments around Private Fostering that the role for the lead officer needed to change to a full time role. During this reported period, the Private Fostering role was undertaken on a part time basis with the Lead Officer also having responsibility for supervising foster carers alongside this. We can confirm that the Lead Officer role is now a full time post which took effect from the 01/04/2018. This has been effective in that the lead officer has focused on raising awareness activities within the community and providing a more focused support service to children living in Private Fostering arrangements. It is also evident that there has been more raising awareness within the different teams across children services as well as partner agencies such as health, schools and international language schools.

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

- 1) The lead officer has continued to provide in-depth training and advice to the children's workforce practitioners. This work has been extended to include attending team meetings, school safeguarding officers' forums, conferences and arranging regular training throughout the year to ensure that social workers, new social workers to Bromley and newly qualified social workers are kept informed and updated on their role in Private Fostering.
- 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 sent 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 sent a circular from the local authority's education department emphasising the need for notifying the local authority about any Private Fostering arrangements they are aware of.
- 4) Ongoing publications were undertaken in 2017/18 through the internal newsletter "In Touch" Spotlight, school circulars and the BSCB newsletter. These publications and newsletters reach wider audiences. They are distributed across the borough and they have been useful in disseminating messages and raising awareness. Private Fostering is also in the new permanency newsletter.

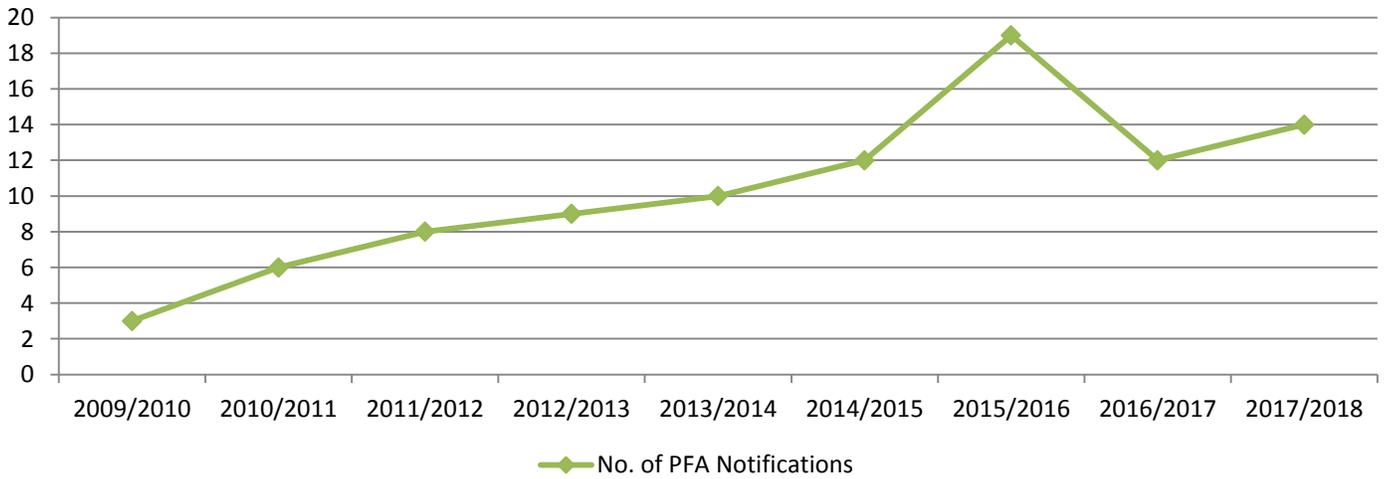
5) In February 2018, the Lead Officer attended the SENCO Forum organised by BSCB where he distributed a guide for professionals as part of raising awareness activities. This was a large and diverse audience with a multiagency presence representing professionals with a large amount of involvement with children and families. We have also promoted Private Fostering awareness by attending various meetings with different organisations and partner agencies.

7.6 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. NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) public health awareness events on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Well-being and the Safeguarding Conference on Empowering the Community. The BSCB has also provided the Private Fostering APP which we have been promoting since its launch in October 2017.

7.7 Bromley Corporate Website has been updated to Private Fostering and it signposts the reader to the Bromley Mylife online Portal (<https://bromley.mylifeportal.co.uk/privatefostering/>)

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

### Graphic analysis of Cases



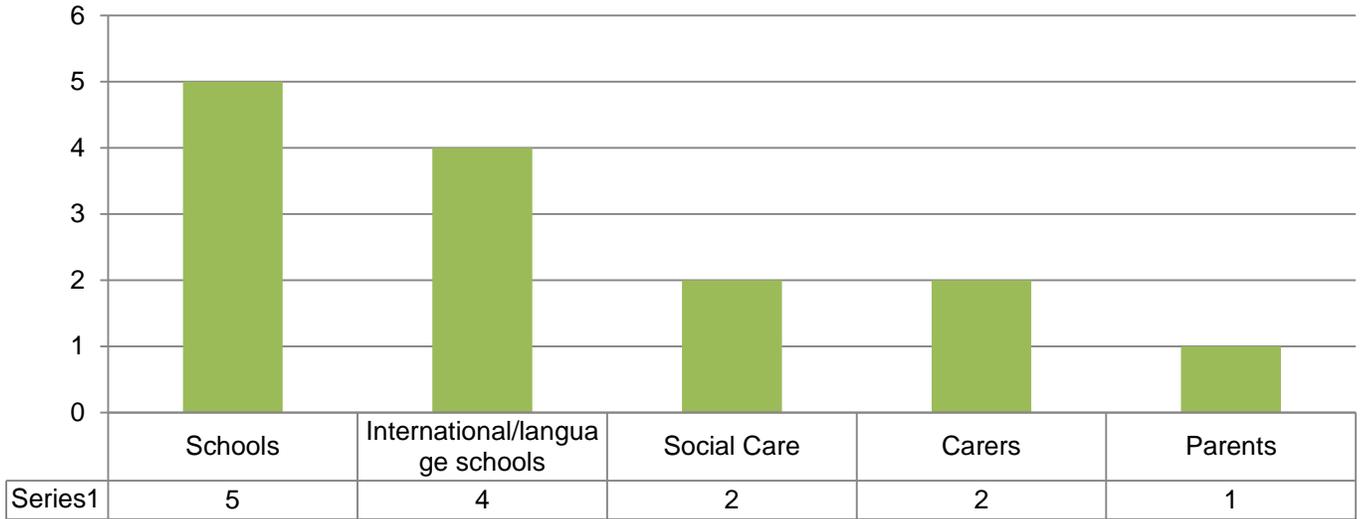
Year	No. of PFA Cases
2009/2010	3
2010/2011	6
2011/2012	8
2012/2013	9
2013/2014	10
2014/2015	12
2015/2016	19
2016/2017	12
2017/2018	14

8.1 Since 1st April 2018 when the process for Private Fostering 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. This is because the notification comes to Private Fostering and MASH. However we have agreed that notifications received by both MASH and Private Fostering are shared between the two teams and Private Fostering is responsible for recording all notifications. Please see the new flow chart on Appendix 1. We can confirm that as at 03/05/2018, we received and recorded six notifications from social workers, parents and schools. This is a significant number of notifications in less than 6 weeks, it is also positive that the notifications are coming from various sources including internally from social workers.

The charts on page 14 and 15 provide a summary of figures showing key Private Fostering cases, not notifications, in Bromley over the last 10 years. It is clear from the graph that the cases have continued to increase over years. As stated in last year's report, in the year 2015/16 there was an upsurge of cases recorded in 7 years. This may have been due to the implementation of the Private Fostering Awareness Campaign, which was launched in 2013/2014 financial year. This figure dropped by 37 per cent the following financial year in 2016/2017 from 19 to 12 PFAs and a contributing factor would have been that during this period the Private Fostering post changed to part time when the service transferred to the Fostering service. However following the review of the post and the work that needed to be undertaken in regards to having a strategic and coordinated awareness campaign, it was decided that the role should be full time and this has been implemented. Whilst this year's figures have increased from 12 in 2016/2017 to 14 in the 2017/2018 financial year which is an increase of 17 percent, it is our assessment that this increase is due to our collaborative work with our partner agencies as well as presentations by the lead officer to colleagues across children services.

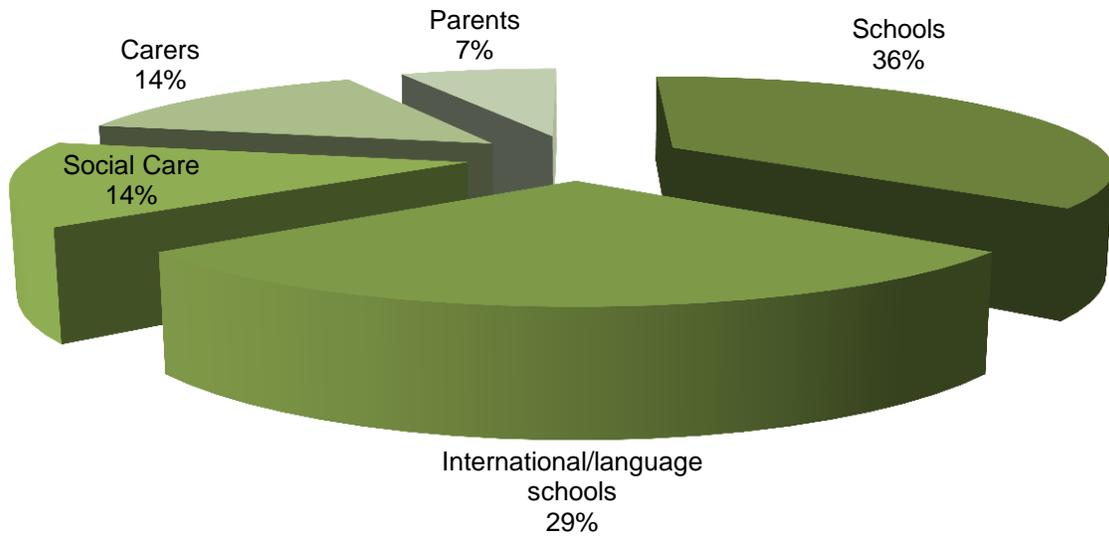
Moving into next year with the Lead Officer post being full time and in changes in our processes included, we are already encouraged by the level of notifications since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and expect this to continue as we go through the year.

### Source of Referrals

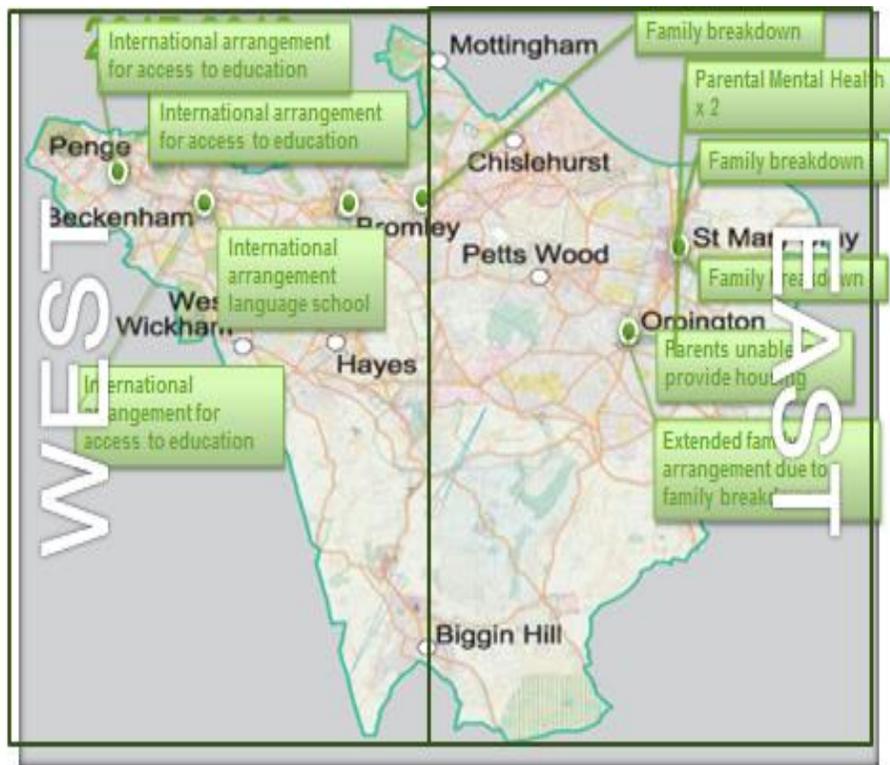


The pie chart below represents the source of referrals. Of the 14 notifications received in the last year, 4 of were from international/language schools, 5 were from schools, 2 from carers, 2 from children social care and 1 from a parent.

### Source of Referral

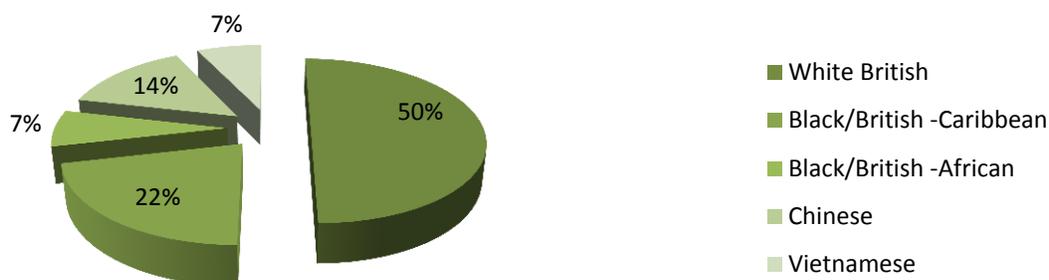


## Bromley Demographic Trends 2017-2018



The diagram above represents the nature of referrals in the Borough of Bromley. We have noticed a trend in that most of the Private Fostering Arrangement from the Westside of the Borough are mostly in a private fostering arrangement for the purpose of accessing Education and in the Eastside of the Borough it would appear these private fostering arrangements are as a result of relationship or family breakdowns.

## Notifications according to Ethnicity



8.3 Out of the 14 notifications, seven children were classified as White British, three Black/British- African-Caribbean, two Chinese, one Vietnamese and one Black British African.

The seven White British children represents 50 per cent of all cases which is an upsurge compared to last financial year, which did not have any White British children recorded as being looked after under a private fostering arrangement. We know that out of the seven children, two were school referrals, two from carers, and one from a parent and two from children social care.

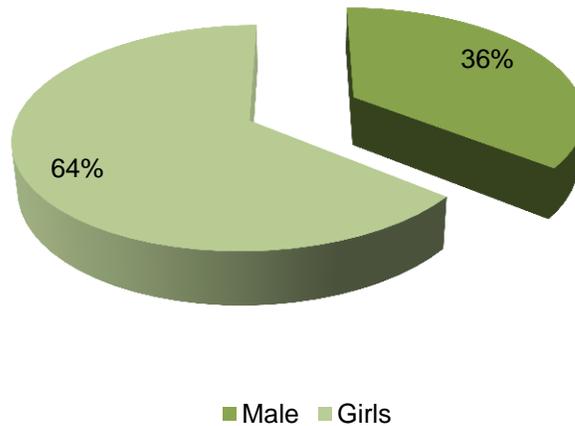
We are not sure why we did not receive any notifications for European students but after speaking to Kings Beckenham they confirmed that most of the European students are not academic students therefore come for less than 27 days and those who are coming for academic study are over the age of 16 years therefore they do not require notification to the Local Authority. There continues to be a mix of ethnicities following up from the last reporting year and it would appear this has continued on to this reporting year.

8.4 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 2016/2017 financial year we have been collating figures from our geographical and statistical neighbors in order to analyse and build on the effectiveness of our campaigns. It is important to note that the figures presented are not an accurate record of the total number of notifications because the figures varied at different points of data collection. However the figures give us a general overview of where we are compared to our geographical and statistical neighbours.

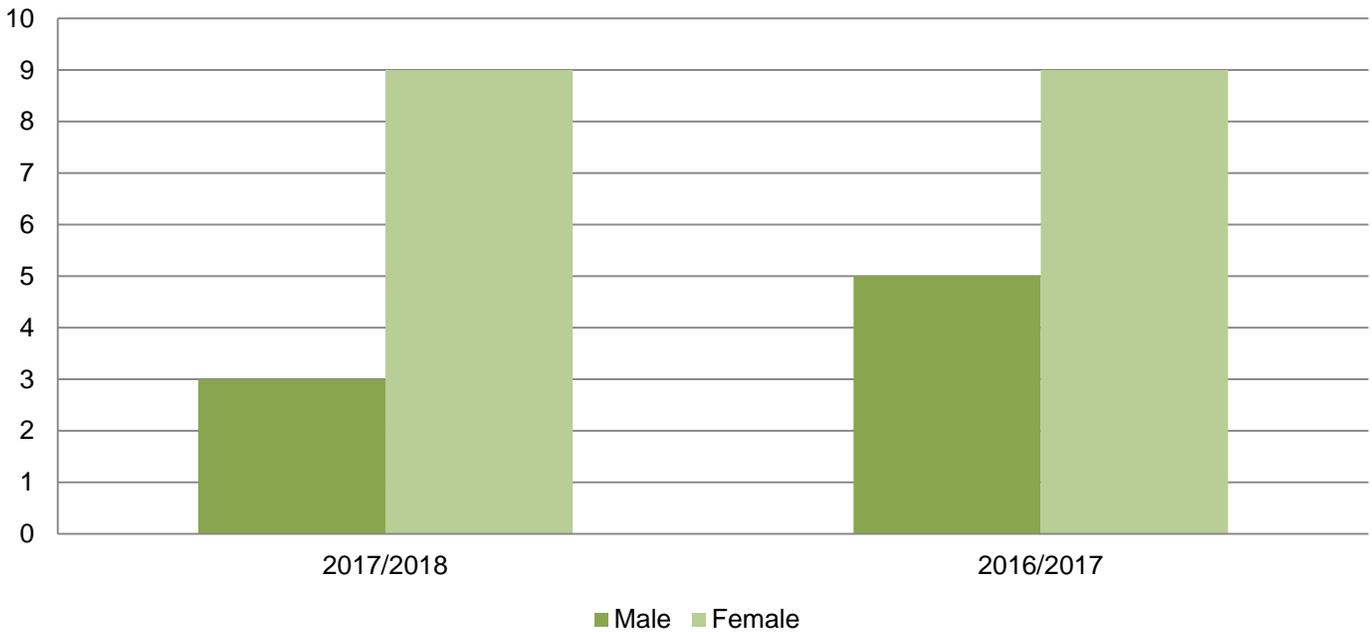
***(Please see Appendix 3)***

## Privately Fostered Children by Gender – Reporting Period of Notifications 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017

### Female to Male Ratio for 2017/2018

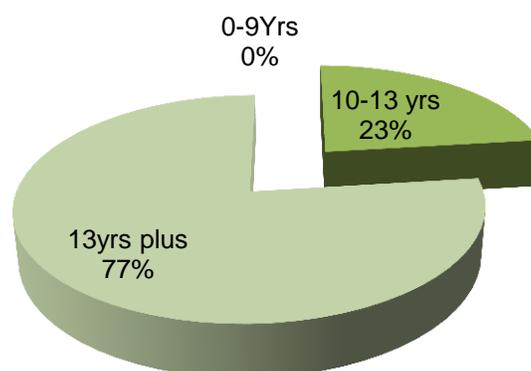


### Gender Ratio 2016/2017 compared to 2017/2018



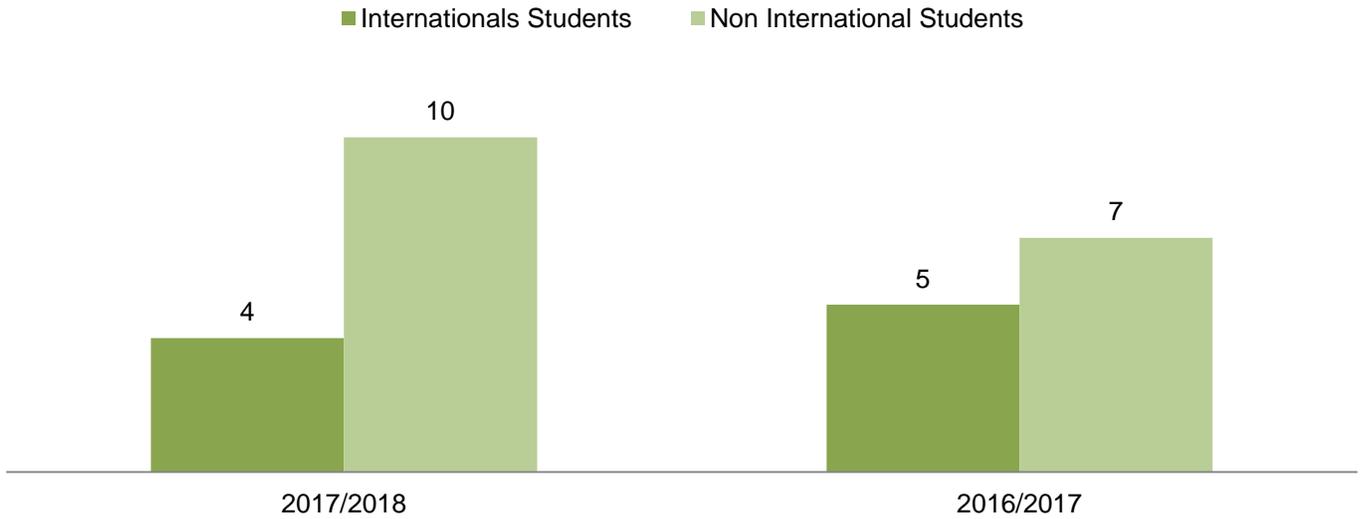
8.5 Out of the 14 notifications, 9 were female and 5 were male. In the year 2016/2017 there were three boys in Private Fostering arrangements compared to nine girls. However in the year 2017/2018 the cases for boys increased from 3 to 5. These figures inform us that there has not been any movement in 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 2017/2018.

### Age range of Privately Fostered children in Bromley as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017



8.6 This table demonstrates that as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, there were no children under 9 years old subject to a Private Fostering arrangement as compared to the year 2016/17 where there were 2 children looked after under a private fostering arrangement within this age range. There has not been an increase in the number of children within the age range 13-16 as the figures remained the same but we have a slight decrease in the children aged 10-12 years from 4 cases last year to 3 cases this year.

## International students - Non International student Ratio



In the 2017/2018 period we have noticed a continued upward trend in notifications from non-international students as compared to the 2016/2017 period where the gap was not too wide. However it would appear this gap has continued to widen, and this may be due to our awareness raising campaign as we received notifications from a number of various sources.

## Classification of PFA Cases which have ceased or transferred to another service.



8.6 Out of the 8 Private Fostering arrangements that ceased:

- three were international students who returned home;
- two cases were transferred to the Safeguarding and Care Planning Team under a Child in Need plan;
- two children were returned to their birth parents;
- One turned 16 years old when the Private Fostering arrangement monitoring ended in accordance to the Private Fostering Regulation 2005.

## **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 benefits, housing, education and health.

9.2 Where possible, the Lead Officer for Private Fostering will continue to offer support to private foster carers in matters of immigration or signpost them to appropriate Legal Service 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 one carer seeking an SGO for an 11 year old boy. At the time of writing this report the carer had received date of final hearing and the Judge had issued Directions to Bromley Children Services to complete the SGO assessment. The final hearing is in October 2018. The lead officer actively advised and supported the carer with the process.

9.4 The Lead Officer for Private Fostering has been available to offer support and advice to colleagues who require clarification on Private Fostering matters. This has included answering emails and phone queries from professionals, schools and other agencies working with children and families.

9.5 The Lead Officer seeks advice and support from the safeguarding team and has escalated cases to a child in need level where necessary.

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

10.1 The Private Fostering service is keen to offer a service user centred approach through gaining feedback from privately fostered children, their parents and carers to better meet their needs and priorities. Bromley has been encouraging privately fostered children, their carers and parents to give their feedback. We are positive about the feedback that we received from children, carers and parents which seem to indicate that they are happy with the service that we are providing for them. One carer commented that *'they felt well supported and have confidence in the service'* the other felt *'the social worker was very professional, pleasant and supportive and felt able to approach them if they needed to'*. The children all seem to express *'that they feel safe and appear to have a relationship with their social worker'*.

10.2 The Lead Officer continues to ensure that social workers received appropriate training which focused on helping them to understand the importance of gathering feedback for further analysis. This will continue and social workers will be asked to report feedback to the Lead Officer.

## 11. Monitoring Compliance with Duties and Functions

The reporting period performance assessed against previous return figures

(Table 1)

Indicators	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Number of notifications of new Private Fostering arrangement received during the year	10	8	20	12	14
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	14
Number of new arrangements that began during the year	10	8	19	12	14
The number of Private Fostering arrangements that began <b>On</b> or <b>After</b> 1 April 2017 where visits were made at intervals of not more than 6 weeks	5	4	17	7	10
The Number of Private Fostering arrangements that began <b>BEFORE</b> 1st April 2017 that were continuing on 1st April 2018	3	8	4	6	1

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Indicators	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
The number of Private Fostering arrangements that began before 1 April 2017 that were continuing on 1 April 2018 where scheduled visits were completed in the requested timescale	3	5	4	0	1
Number of Private Fostering arrangements that ended during the year	4	11	15	13	6
Number of children under Private Fostering arrangements as of 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	13	6	9	8	5

## 12. Action Plan for 2018-19

Ref	Recommendation	Action	When and by whom
1	The Local Authority's Statement of Purpose in relation to Private fostering to be reviewed annually.		GM 16/08/2018
2	There will be on going well-coordinated raising awareness activities throughout the year as well as during Private Fostering Week in July 2018 as outlined in the Communication Plan.	Training for social workers, safeguarding officers in schools and hospitals as well as support workers in the children centres.	May 18 and Ongoing
	The Lead Officer for Private fostering to monitor the effectiveness of raising awareness and report to his manager of its outcomes or any difficulties.		31 <sup>st</sup> May and Ongoing
3	To raise the awareness of private fostering senior leaders should plan that Bromley council mobile phones distributed to all staff (ideally) but most certainly all children's and education services staff have the BSCB and private fostering apps automatically downloaded.	Lead officer to contact IT and arrange a meeting and assess the best way to implement the plan. To encourage staff in the meantime to download onto their own private phones.	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2018
4	The Lead officer for Private fostering to review the Local Authority's Communications Plan in relation to raising awareness about private fostering in line with the OFSTED recommendations and good practice undertaken by other Local Authorities.	Liaise with neighbouring LA's Private Fostering Leads exchange and share information on raising awareness.	1 <sup>st</sup> June 2018
5	The Lead officer to continue working with language schools and agencies providing host families for overseas students attending language school, to ensure they fully brief their host	Kings College <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mander Portman Woodward</li> <li>• Ashgrove School</li> <li>• Bromley High School</li> <li>• Bishop Challoner Independent School</li> </ul>	

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	families on both their responsibilities and those of the Local Authority's in relation to the assessment and most importantly the on-going monitoring of such arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kings London</li> <li>• Farringtons School</li> <li>• Babington House School</li> <li>• Baston House School</li> <li>• Bickley Park School</li> <li>• Breaside Preparatory School</li> <li>• Browns School</li> <li>• Darul Uloom London Islamic School</li> <li>• Eltham College</li> <li>• St Christopher's The Hall School</li> <li>• St David's College</li> <li>• Wickham Court School</li> <li>• The Tutorial Foundation</li> </ul>	
7	The Lead officer for Private fostering to book new training dates to provide training for children workforce practitioner and partner agencies	The next training will include social workers for all social work teams and partner agencies.	Next training in June 2018
8	The Lead Officer for Private Fostering to continue attending the Private Fostering Specialist Interest Group (PFSIG) throughout the year which is run by CORAM/BAAF and use this as mechanism to disseminate any lessons learnt or examples of best practice from other Local Authorities.	The Lead Officer has been attending PFSIG and the last meeting was Jan 2018.	March 19
9	The Lead Officer for Private Fostering to ensure that Leaflets/information for privately fostered children and their parents and carers are translated into at least two different languages which include two Chinese main language – Cantonese and Mandarin . These languages are considered to be the current most commonly spoken by foreign language students who are classified as privately fostered children in Bromley.	Posters and leaflets have been translated into Polish, Bengali, Chinese, Urdu and Arabic  Polish, Bengali and Urdu are the most spoken languages in Bromley after English, Polish being the second most spoken language after English.	May-18
10	The Lead Officer for Private fostering to continue liaising with Bromley Website administrators and Corporate Communication Department to ensure that all necessary information about private fostering in Bromley are	The Lead Officer to continue liaising with web team so they will continue with publication regarding private fostering awareness similar to last year. Via Bromley council Inform publication	On-going, Private Fostering awareness campaign to be

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	available and updated online and published on local newspapers. Leaflets and posters to be distributed in accordance with the Communication Plan for 2018/2019.	All-important key information about private fostering in Bromley is now available on Bromley's website and further information will be published as appropriate Promotion online - bromley.gov.uk homepage, one Bromley, Bromley MyLife homepage, social media, and others  New posters and postcards with the new Private Fostering App were designed and printed for raising awareness in August 2018.	uploaded on the Bromley Website by May 2018 in preparation for Private Fostering Awareness Week in July 2018
11	The Lead officer for Private fostering to continue liaising with the LA's website and twitter administrators as well as the LA's Corporate Communication Department to ensure that the service supports raising awareness of PF through their social media during Annual National Private Fostering Week in July 2017.	Articles to be published in key newsletters - LBB (Inform & spotlight), School Circulars, police & fire service, voluntary sector (Community Links), GP's (CCG), and others	May-18
12	The Lead Officer for Private Fostering to ensure that privately fostered children, their parents and carers are expressed their views about the services they have been getting and use the feedback and responses collected to support service change and development.	Feedback forms to be sent to all host family member, private foster carers, parents of privately fostered children and privately fostered children and YP	April 18
13	The Lead officer for private fostering to work with MASH to look at complex notifications and to hold discussions around assessing team.	Social workers to continue receiving advice and support from the Lead Officer on all complex private fostering matters notifications	May-18
14	The lead officer for Private fostering to continue working with the Business Manager for Bromley Safeguarding Children's Board (BSCB) in regards to raising awareness about private fostering in Bromley.	The Manager for BSCB to continue working as a member of Private Fostering Communication project team and to continue contributing to the Private fostering raising awareness activities as an going matter.	March 19 and Ongoing

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15	The Lead Officer for private fostering to continue working with Children's Performance Improvement Officer in regards to monitoring our figures and ensuring that information and data are correct on CareFirst.	Regular PF spreadsheets to be analysed each week to ensure that children are correctly recorded and being in a private fostering arrangement and this to be confirmed with HOS and GM.	April 2019 and ongoing
16	The Lead officer for private fostering to meet with the Bromley's Schools Principal Admissions Officer to ensure that completed forms are checked for potential private fostering arrangements.	The lead officer to arrange a meeting with school admissions team to discuss robust, effective and efficient ways for schools to work in partnership with the LA in identifying and notifying potential private fostering arrangements in schools.	June 2018
17	The Lead Officer to ensure that Private fostering cases that need to be transferred to other Services are included and presented at the Transfer Panel.	To be completed by 1 <sup>st</sup> April	April 18
18	All assessments for private fostering arrangements to be undertaken by the PF Lead.	A meeting was convened between MASH and Private fostering on the 23/02/2018 and an Action Plan was agreed to ensure that the service's transfer protocols and all other systems were put in place in time for the service transfer to the Fostering Service. That is, streamlining the notification and Regulation 4 process to MASH then straight to PF.	April 18
19	Information and advice to be given to Boarding schools within the Bromley area.	Lead practitioner to liaise with Bromley Girls High and Eltham College.	May-18
20.	Review audits undertaken and ensure all actions are completed.	Godwin to inform Mark that all actions have been completed and Mark to check	July-18
21.	Contact Nicola from CareFirst and ask for a drop down to be added for birth fathers within the assessment	Mark to e-mail CareFirst.	Jul-18
22.	Ensure all visits are in timescales.	Godwin	Apr-18
23.	Review figures and provide an update for our statistical neighbours.	Godwin	Jul-18

Written By:

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

Date: **10.08.2018**

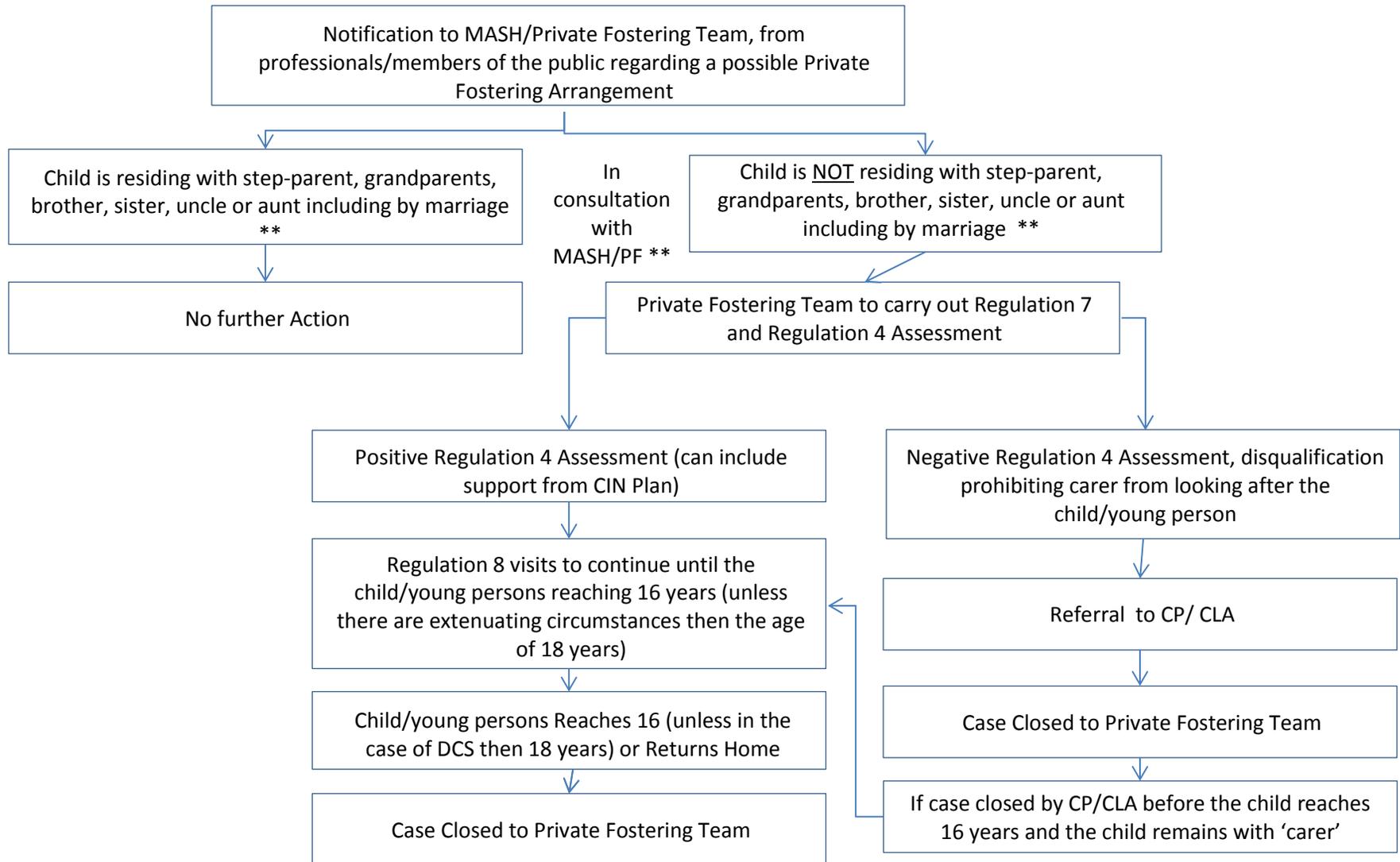
**Mark Vening**, Group Manager, Family Placements, Fostering Team

Date: **17.08.2018**

# 14. Appendices

## Appendix 2

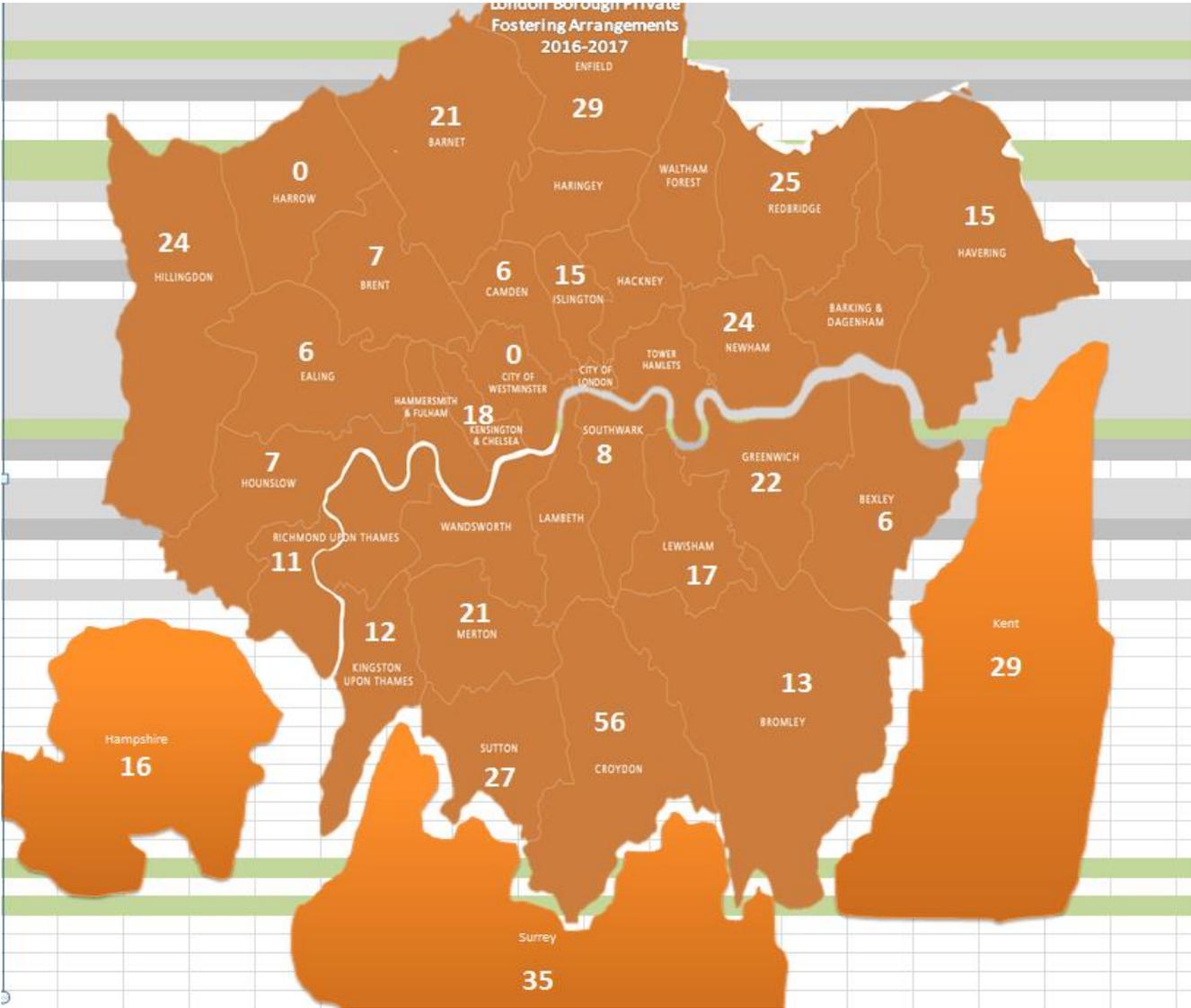
## Private Fostering Flow Chart as at 01 April 2018



Appendix 3

PRIVATE FOSTERING STATISTICS IN SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

for 2016/2017



Appendix 3 continued

PRIVATE FOSTERING STATISTICS IN SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

2017/2018

