

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Safeguarding Sub Committee	03/10/19
<b>Subject:</b> Private Fostering Annual Report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Pat Dixon, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Manager, Department of Community and Children's Services	

### Summary

There have been no private fostering arrangements identified in the City of London for 2018 to 2019. Therefore, this report will inform Members about how the City of London has met the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering by raising awareness of private fostering arrangements with professionals and residents in the City of London. During Private Fostering week, which took place from 9 to 13 July 2018, there were stalls set up and manned in various locations to promote awareness of private fostering arrangements. Leaflets were distributed at the stalls. The leaflets and banners had the message; "Are you caring for someone else's child?" This did have the desired effect of generating further conversation about private fostering arrangements.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

### Main Report

#### Background

#### Definition of Private Fostering Arrangements

1. A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (that is, without the involvement of the 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. Private foster carers may be from the extended family, such as a cousin or great-aunt, or they may be a friend of the family, or other non-relative, such as the parents of the child's friend. A person who is a close relative of the child, as defined by the Children Act 1989 (a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt – whether by

full- or half-blood or by marriage or civil partnership – or step-parent), is not a private foster carer.

2. Examples of private fostering arrangements are:

- children sent from abroad to stay with another family, usually to improve their English or for educational opportunities
- asylum-seeking and refugee children
- teenagers who, having broken ties with their parents, have short-term arrangements to stay with friends or other non-relatives
- children living with host families, arranged by language schools or other organisations
- children living with members of the extended family, such as a great-aunt.

3. The primary responsibility of the local authority is to safeguard and promote the welfare of these children and young people by:

- meeting the duty to promote public awareness of the requirement to notify the local authority of private fostering arrangements and, therefore, to reduce the number of 'unknown' private fostering arrangements
- responding to notifications and assessing the private fostering arrangements
- meeting the duty to support private fostering arrangements.

4. This responsibility is underpinned by the Replacement Children Act 1989 Guidance on Private Fostering; Children Act 2004 (Section 44 amends Section 67 in the 1989 Act); the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005.

## **Current Position**

5. As evidenced within this report, there have been no private fostering arrangements identified in the City over the last 12 months. There have been concerted efforts to promote awareness around private fostering throughout the year. Schools in the City of London have information on private fostering displayed in parent areas. Libraries also have posters and leaflets displayed in public areas. The Strategic Communications Officer also ensures that information on private fostering is distributed within publications that go out to City residents.
6. The City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) has included information about private fostering arrangements within their safeguarding training for Designated Safeguarding Leads. Children's Social Care and Early Help staff are also informed about private fostering as part of their induction. There is also promotion of the Private Fostering App, which professionals can download; if they complete a quiz on the app, they can receive a certificate. It should be noted that notification of private fostering arrangements is also an issue in other local authorities, where there are low referrals.

## **Conclusion**

7. As identified within this report, there have been no referrals in regard to private fostering arrangements in the City of London from April 2018 through to end March 2019. In the past five years, there has only been one referral in relation to private fostering arrangements. Training has been given to professionals, and this will continue through the CHSCP, and as part of the induction programme. As previously identified, notifications about private fostering arrangements across other local authorities remains fairly low. In 2019, and to through to 2020, there will be continued efforts to raise awareness, looking at more innovative ways of engaging with residents through joint initiatives with neighbouring boroughs and the engagement of community groups and various faith leaders.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Annual Private Fostering report.

## **Background Papers**

- *Statutory guidance – National minimum standards for private fostering.*

Available at this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-minimum-standards-for-private-fostering>

## **Pat Dixon**

Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Manager  
Department of Community and Children's Services

T: 020 7332 1215

E: [pat.dixon@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:pat.dixon@cityoflondon.gov.uk)