

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub-Committee	19/06/2023
Subject: Private Fostering Annual Report 2022 to 2023	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Outcome 1
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Pat Dixon, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service	

Summary

There have been no private fostering arrangements identified in the City of London for 2022 to 2023. Therefore, this report will inform Members about how the City of London has met the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering by raising awareness. There are some outstanding actions from 2021 to 2022 – these have been incorporated into the recommendations in the Annual Report 2022 to 2023. However, the City of London has been promoting private fostering through the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) app and the distribution of leaflets to partner agencies. There have also been opportunities to raise awareness with partners through multi-agency meetings.

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 stepparent), 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. There have been concerted efforts to promote awareness around private fostering throughout the year. Private fostering has been raised within the Safeguarding Education Forum, and City of London Schools have information displayed in areas where parents and carers congregate. Libraries also have posters and leaflets on private fostering displayed in public areas. The Strategic Communications Officer also ensures that information on private fostering is included with publications that are distributed to City residents.
6. The 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 and, as we come out of the pandemic, there will be more opportunities to raise awareness through staff induction days, conferences, and resident events.

Options

7. N/A

Proposals

8. N/A

Key Data

9. N/A

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. Financial implications – N/A

11. Resource implications – N/A

12. Legal implications – N/A

13. Risk implications – N/A

14. Equalities implications – N/A

15. Climate implications – N/A

16. Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

17. As identified in this report, there have been no referrals regarding private fostering arrangements in the City of London from April 2022 through to the end of March 2023. A recommendation from the 2021 to 2022 private fostering report was to meet with faith leaders on the borders of the City of London. This recommendation has yet to be actioned and will be progressed in 2023. Further to this, information about Private Fostering for parents, carers and young people will be available on the Family and Young Peoples Information website.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Private Fostering Annual Report 2022 to 2023.

Background Papers

- Statutory guidance – National minimum standards for private fostering:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-minimum-standards-for-private-fostering

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