





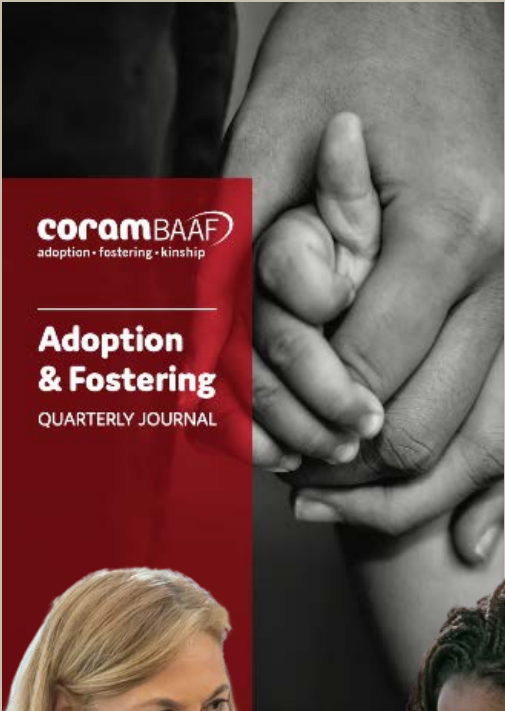
Private Fostering – an introduction



Who are we?



Available
as an
eBook

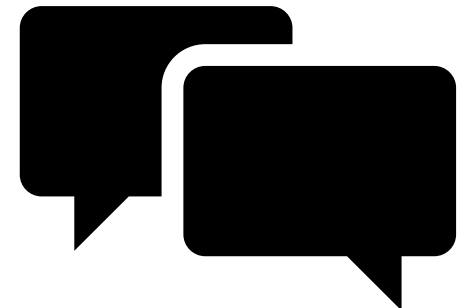
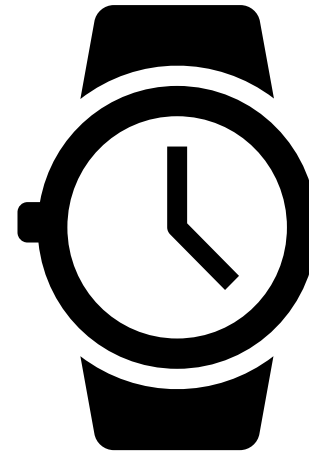
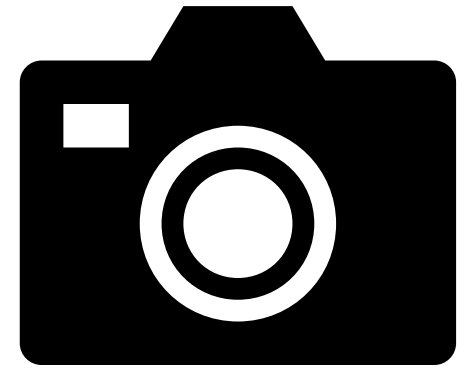


94%
of all local authorities
in England, Wales,
Scotland and Northern
Ireland are members.

Housekeeping

Please make sure you:

- Silence your phone
- Turn on your camera
- Mute your microphone
- Pop your name and role in the chat
- Session is being recorded



Definition

- A child under the age of 16
- A child with a disability under the age of 18
- Cared for by an adult who is not:
 - Parent
 - Grandparent
 - Aunt or uncle
 - Stepparent (including civil partnerships)
 - Brother or Sister
- Cared for 28 days or more
- Arrangement is made privately without the involvement of a Local Authority.



Background



- Death of Victoria Climbié 25/2/2000
- Victoria was 8 years old when she died
- Lived with her great-aunt and her boyfriend from April 99 until her death
- They starved and tortured her to death; convicted of her murder in 2001
- Public Enquiry – Laming Report Jan 2003
- Not large numbers of children
- Often children are deemed to be a child in need as well as being private fostered

Quiz – private fostering or not?

- Veronica has asked her mum, Sandra, to look after her son, Toby (8), while she goes to visit her friend in Wales for 3 weeks.
- Hannah, 15, has had an argument with her mum and has been staying at her best friend's house for a couple of months.
- Bobby lives with his dad and stepfather Aaron. The couple are separating and Bobby's dad has agreed Bobby will live with Aaron.
- Maureen has been looking after Ollie (17), her cousin's son for 2 months. He has severe learning difficulties.



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- First ever National Kinship Care Strategy December 2023
- First definition of kinship care including:

A private fostering arrangement in which someone who is not a close relative of the child looks after the child for 28 days or more (p. 44)

- This only applies to individuals, not organisations or bodies, such as language schools or football academies
- Expansion of Virtual School Head role



What does the law say?

The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 (legislation.gov.uk)

- Parent/private foster carer must notify local authority of proposed arrangement
- Local authority must assess and support
- Sets out what must be contained in assessment



What does the law say?

National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering:

1. Local authority has written statement
2. Promote awareness
3. Assess suitability
4. Provide advice and support to private foster carers
5. Provide advice and support to parents
6. Provide information for children
7. Local authority monitors its duties

Kinship Care:

Statutory guidance for local authorities

October 2024

- **Kinship care: statutory guidance for local authorities**
- Private fostering needs to be covered by kinship local offer
- Private foster carers may at the same time be kinship carers facing the same issues as other kinship carers, and should have access to the same range of support services as informal kinship carers
- **Kinship Compass - training and events**





Private fostering is not.....

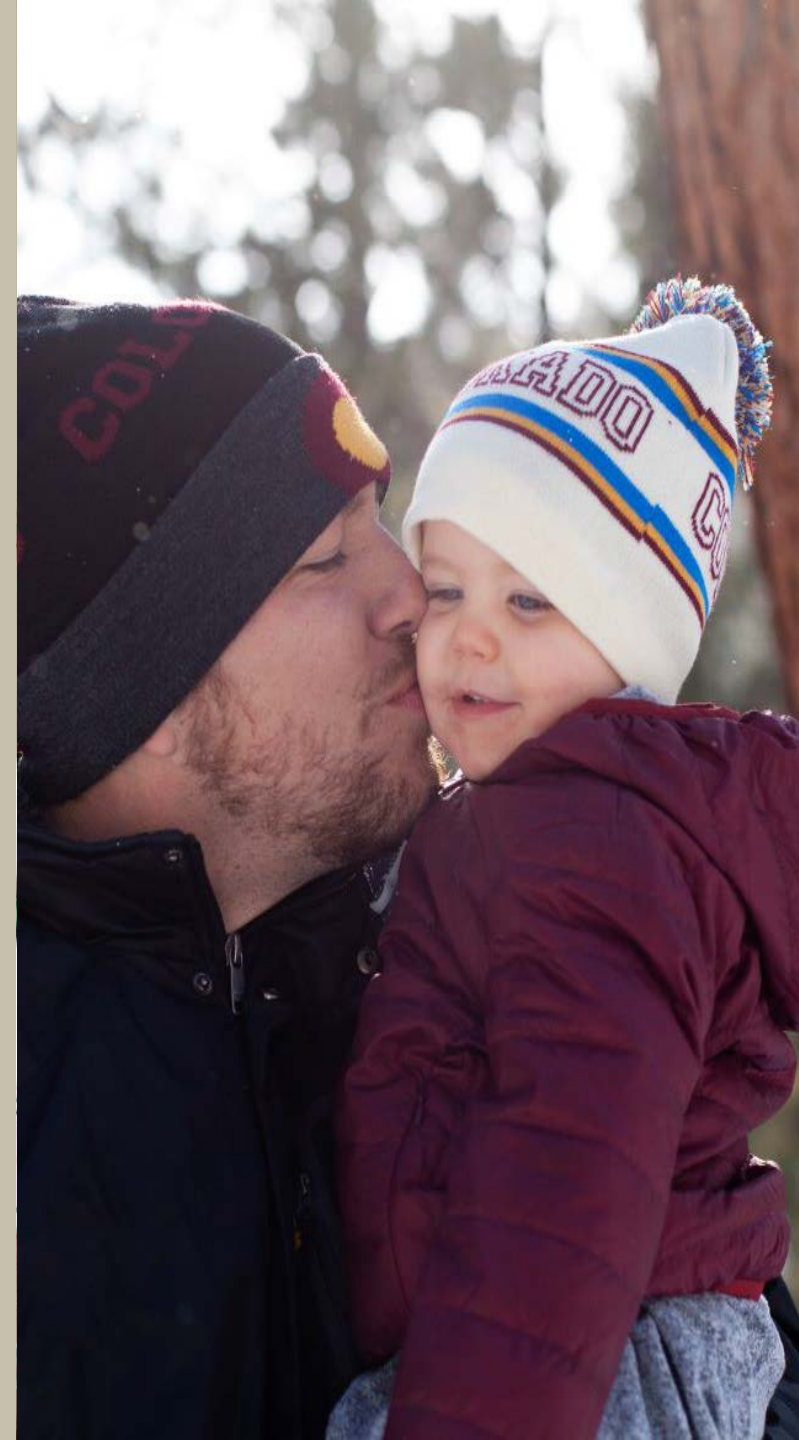
- Necessarily kinship care
- Fostering for a private fostering agency
- Children are not 'in care' or 'looked after'
- Day care

Who are the children?

- Child whose parent cannot care for them
- Child's parent may live abroad
- Child's parent may be working or studying in UK and not be able to care for child
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- Children who have been trafficked
- Children attending language schools
- Children attending boarding schools who cannot return to parent during school holidays
- Children from Ukraine

Privately fostered children – needs

- Anxiety about not living with/seeing parents
- May be living with people that they don't know
- May have had to change schools
- May not have contact with their communities
- Cultural and identity needs
- May be at risk of exploitation
- Access to universal support/health services



| PARENTS – RESPONSIBILITIES | PRIVATE FOSTER CARERS - RESPONSIBILITIES |
|--|--|
| Make private fostering arrangement | Notify local authority of arrangement if parents' do not |
| Notify local authority of arrangement | Ensure that child's needs are met including contact with family, identity, culture, health and education |
| Provide financially for their child | Notify local authority of changes in circumstances, including death of the child |
| Retain parental responsibility | Cannot make significant changes without parental consent |
| Provide full information about child's needs | Can care for three children only, unless siblings |
| Notify local authority if arrangement ends | Notify local authority if arrangement ends |

Private foster carers can't:

- Change a child's name
- Change child's school (without parental consent)
- Move the child to another family
- Move to another address
- Take child overseas (without parental consent)
- Arrange medical care, unless emergency
- Care for more than 3 children (unless siblings)



| LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSIBILITY | ACTION REQUIRED |
|---|--|
| Have policy and procedures | Promote awareness locally |
| Provide advice and support | Ensure that private foster carers are receiving all support available including benefits and are included in kinship local offer |
| Assess private fostering arrangement | Visit within seven working days of notification Assessment report to be shared within 42 day |
| Monitor arrangement | Visit every 6 weeks for first year, every 12 weeks beyond that. Ensure that child is seen on their own Review arrangement |
| Prohibitions and requirements Section 69 (1) Children Act 1989 | Prohibit if arrangement not assessed as suitable Specify requirements necessary for arrangement to continue |

Private fostering does not relate to those:

- Where parent or carer with PR is living in same accommodation
- In accommodation provided by voluntary organisation, health setting, full-time education setting, care home or independent hospital
- If subject to Youth Rehabilitation Order
- If detained under Mental Health Act 1983
- While living with someone who has been placed with the intention of being adopted

Assessment

- To assess whether private foster carer can meet child's needs
- To include: DBS checks, local authority checks, suitability of accommodation, ability to promote relationship with parents and other family members, ability to meet child's needs including culture and identity
- Speak to, and if possible, meet with the parents



Assessment and review

- Not all children in private fostering arrangements will be a child in need, but both assessments can be completed concurrently
- Liaise with other agencies who know the child, private foster carer and their family
- Private foster carer and parents must be advised of outcome of assessment in writing within 5 working days
- No set pro forma for assessment report
- Arrangements should be reviewed regularly

Prohibitions and Requirements

Section 69(1) Children Act 1989, LA can prohibit PF if:

- assessed as not being suitable
- accommodation is not suitable
- would be prejudicial to child to remain in care of private foster carer

Requirements:

- LA can require changes to make arrangement suitable



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Dilemmas

Dilemma - Assessment

- Private foster carers refuse to be assessed:
 - It is a legal requirement
 - Need to advise the LA may prosecute
 - Reality = LA supervising 'unsuitable' arrangement
 - Parents could ask for child to be accommodated

Dilemma - Consent

- Parents have not given consent to arrangement:
 - If child old enough and 'Gillick competent' may be appropriate to make own decisions
 - PF advised to seek Child Arrangements Order
 - LA may decide child at risk of significant harm and initiate care proceedings

Dilemma -

Step-parent

- Child is living with grandparent and partner and grandparent dies:
 - Arrangement would previously have been informal kinship arrangement
 - Becomes private fostering arrangement as partner is not a close relative
 - Partner could be supported to seek CAO or LA may decide s20 is necessary and therefore Reg 24 temporary approval as kinship foster carer

Dilemma - Age

- Child turns 16 years during assessment:
 - If concerns, CIN plan
 - If not, no longer a private fostering arrangement
 - Unless child has a disability, then PF until 18

Dilemma - Ending

- Parent seeks return of child, but PFC disagrees:
 - Parental responsibility remains with the parent therefore can make that decision
 - Social worker needs to consider emotional wellbeing of child and take steps if concerned
 - LA has no involvement with making PF arrangement therefore it is parents' decision

Practice forums and training

CoramBAAF runs Private Fostering Practice Forums:

- Monday 18th November 2024 10am – 12.30pm
- Monday 10th March 2025 10am – 12.30pm

Book via the website: [Private fostering practice forum](#)

- Friday 13th December 2024 and Tuesday 3rd June 2025 9.45am – 1pm

[An introduction to private fostering | CoramBAAF](#)



Evaluation and certificate

Your feedback helps us improve our events.

To fill in our evaluation form scan the QR code.

Once you have completed your evaluation form you will receive your certificate.

Thank you from CoramBAAF



We hope to see you again soon!



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