



Newham London

# **Private Fostering Service**

Statement of Purpose 2018/19

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## 1. Introduction

This Statement of Purpose explains our vision, objectives and services provided by Children's Social Care to identify, monitor and support Private Fostering arrangements in Newham. In doing so it sets out how the service meets the requirements of the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005.

The services to Private Foster Carers and children being cared for in these arrangements, is within the duties of the Fostering Team, part of Newham Children and Young People's Services.

This Statement of Purpose is updated regularly and reviewed by the Lead Member for Children's Services. It is available to staff, Private Foster Carers, children and young people, other professionals and the public upon request.

The legislative framework for private fostering arrangements was established within the Children Act 1989 and continues in the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 together with the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering which came into force in July 2005.

## 2. Legal definition

The definition of a privately fostered child:

A private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under aged 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 private fostering arrangement is one that is:

- made privately, without the involvement of a local authority,
- for the care of a child under the age of 16 (or up to age 18, if the child is disabled)
- for care of the child, provided by someone other than a parent or close relative".

A "close relative" is defined as:

- Grandparent,
- Brother or Sister,
- Uncle or Aunt, or
- Step-parent;
- and be a full or half relation by blood or marriage.

Private foster carers may be from the extended family such as a cousin or a great aunt. However, a person who is a relative under the Children Act 1989, i.e., a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full or half blood or by marriage) or step-parent will not be a private foster carer.

A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child. The period for which the child is cared for and accommodated by the foster carer should be continuous by that continuity is not broken by the occasional short break.

- Legal Definitions of other arrangements

A child's caring arrangement is not considered to be a Private Fostering arrangement when:

- The carer is the child's parent

- The carer has parental responsibility
- The carer is an approved foster carer and the placement was made by Children & Young People's Authority.
- The placement lasts for less than 28 days.

The arrangement should last for 28 days or more to be considered a privately fostered arrangement and the period should be continuous.

Some common examples of private fostering arrangements include: children/young people with families overseas; children and young people with parents working or studying in the UK; trafficked children and young people and unaccompanied children and young people and refugees; children/young people living with host families for a variety of reasons, i.e. attending language schools, undergoing medical treatment etc.

With all Private Fostering arrangements, the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child remains with the parent or person with parental responsibility.

If you are looking after someone else's child, or are considering doing so, please refer to Newham's Family and Friends Policy on the fostering page of Newham.gov website. The Family and Friends Policy will clarify what constitutes a private fostering arrangement and outlines other arrangements where a child is unable to live with their birth parents.

### **3. Examples of Private Fostering relationships**

Some common examples of circumstances in which Private Fostering arrangements may occur;

- Children living with a friend's family due to family breakdown or parent's ill health.
- Children whose parent work commitments takes them away from the home for more than 28 days and the child is residing with a carer who is not a 'close relative'.
- A teenager "sofa surfing" and living with friends or in the home of a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Overseas students who are living with a carer or 'host family' for over 28 days.
- Children who are attending independent schools, boarding schools or language schools and living with a carer 'host family' for over 28 days.
- Unaccompanied children who arrive in the UK seeking asylum and residing with a carer who is not a 'close relative'.
- Children who are brought into the UK with a view to adoption and residing with a carer who is not a 'close relative' will be privately fostered until formal notice of intention to apply to adopt is given to the local authority.

### **4. Our vision for children and young people**

Our vision, as set out in the Children and Young People's Plan 2018-19, is to ensure each one of our 85,391 children and young people has the capacity, skills, independence and resilience they will need to meet the challenges of adult life in the 21st century.

In support of this vision Newham's Children's Trust identified 3 key priorities where the partnership could work together to make a step change in outcomes for children and young people:

- Children and young people are safe and feel safe;
- Children and young people are economically successful and achieve their aspirations;
- Children and young people are healthy and happy.

Our commitment to the vision and priorities is crucial to children living in privately fostered arrangements to ensure they have the same advantages as any other Newham child.

Our primary objectives with private fostering arrangements are to

- Ensure that proposed or actual Private Foster Care arrangements across the borough do not pose any risk to the child. (NMS 3)
- Develop a high level of awareness throughout the borough of what constitutes a Private Fostering arrangement, and the notification requirements, both among the public and professionals working with children. (NMS 2)
- Ensure that, once registered, Private Foster Carers are fully supported to deliver the best possible outcomes for the household and children. (NMS 4,5 & 6)
- Ensure that Privately Fostered children are provided with information about their care, consulted as to their wishes and feelings, and are able to be healthy, happy, and achieve their aspirations in a Private Foster setting. (NMS 6)
- That where an existing Private Fostering relationship is assessed as not being in the best interests of the child, action is taken to improve practice in the interest of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child. (NMS 7)

## 5. Our principles and approach

- We recognise that Newham's Private Foster Carers are an important part of the range of Family and Friends carers in the borough, and that many such arrangements improve the quality of life for parents and children across Newham.
- Provided that care is of a sufficient and stable character, Private Foster Carers and children in these arrangements will be fully supported to remain safe and successful in their setting.
- No child will be left to 'drift' in unsuitable care, and we commit as a partnership to ensuring at least as good outcomes or better for children in private foster care, than a child growing up in their birth family.
- The wishes, feelings and aspirations of Privately Fostered children are central to our decision making process and also inform the way in which we deliver services. We have expanded our conversation via child consultation forms and case reviews focused on the wishes and feelings of the child.
- The Local Authority will take the lead on ensuring high public awareness of the Private Fostering Agenda to improve notifications. We also recognise the importance of ongoing liaison with our partnership agencies including health and education.
- We are aware that responses to Private Fostering matters are the responsibility of social workers and other professionals across Safeguarding Services and partner agencies.
- We will improve the quality of data and monitoring around our service so that we can be sure we are:
  - performing well as an organisation and
  - delivering better outcomes for young people.
 We will continue to consistently monitor against quality standards to ensure consistent and sustained improvement.
- We respect and protect the right to privacy for our children and their families including their feelings and wishes, their personal data and their right to pursue their own lives and develop successfully.

## 6. Our staff

The structure chart below shows the staffing levels within the Private Fostering Service and Placements Services, as at December 2018:

<b>Children &amp; Young People's Service Fostering and Adoption</b>			
Chris Chalmers Head of Division and Agency Decision Maker			
Mussarat Gul Service Manager & Agency Professional Adviser			
<b>Carer Recruitment Team</b>		<b>Panel</b>	
Lorraine Y Browne	Practice Leader	Vicky Hennessey Panel Administrator	
Esther Duncan	Social Worker		
Vivienne Foxe (p/t)	Social Worker	<b>Private Fostering Team</b>	
Vacant	Social Worker		
Vacant	Recruitment & Development Manager		
Katie Sprague	Recruitment Officer	Nasim Ahmed Practice Lead	
Dulcie Harrison	Business Support		
<b>Fostering Team</b>		<b>Adoption Team</b>	
Suzette Du Rand	Practice Leader	Anthea Bennett Practice Leader	
Mark Thompson	Practice Leader		
Dianne Wilson (p/t)	Social Worker	Alexandra Cucu Social Worker Belinda Bhatti Social Worker Shasna Hussain Social Worker Reshma Kazi-Mendez Social Worker Vacant Social Worker Lesley Arthur Contact Coordinator Valerie Layzell Business Support	
Lynda Bowler	Social Worker		
Jo Cockrell (p/t)	Social Worker		
Amor Michl (p/t)	Social Worker		
Eleonora Sai	Social Worker		
Ann Lane	Social Worker		
Geta Gorun	Social Worker		
Freda Page	Social Worker		
Anita Howard	Social Worker		
Selam Al-Azar	Social Worker		
Minh Nguyen-Luu	Business Support		

The management team of the Fostering Service consists of:

Mussarat Gul (Service Manager, Placement Services) qualified in 1997 and holds a Diploma in Social Work. She also holds an MSc in Social Work, a DMS and MBA in public services. She has 15 years experience in childcare starting her social work career in the Amber Project, a residential unit which undertook court directed assessments. She then went on to manage an adolescent team for children in need.

Mussarat has managed Placement Services since 2010, prior to which she held the post of Senior Manager of the Adoption Team. She has been a panel member for both the fostering and adoption panels and is currently the Professional Advisor for the Fostering Panel.

Suzette Du Rand (Team Manager, Fostering) qualified in 1979 and holds a BSc in Social Work. Suzette started her social work career working within generic placements in her country of birth South Africa. She moved on to specialise within a fostering and adoption team.

For the next ten years Suzette's next role was in a therapeutic setting within children's homes. She then went on to manage a Community Development team specialising within the field of families living with HIV and Aids.

Suzette immigrated to the UK in 2004 and for the first year worked in the Children in Need Team before transferring to the Fostering Team. Becoming Deputy Team Manager of the Fostering Team in 2010, Suzette has held the position of Team Manager since March 2013. Suzette is a permanent employee.

Mark Thompson (Deputy Team Manager) qualified in 1999 with a Diploma and BSc (Hons) Degree in Social Work. Mark has gained significant experience of child care having worked with disabled children, looked after children and in child protection teams in the public sector.

Mark joined the Fostering Team in 2011 as Senior Social Worker responsible for Private Fostering. He became Deputy Team Manager in March 2013.

Mark is a permanent employee with extensive knowledge of working with young people who have been fostered.

Nasim Ahmed (Private Fostering Lead Social Worker) qualified in 1997 with a Diploma in Social Work and obtained Post Qualifying Child Care Award in 2004. Nasim is a permanent employee and has been employed by Newham since 1998.

Nasim has extensive social work experience in working within the Children and Young People Services in statutory social work teams within Newham which includes Children In Need, Family Support Team, Residential Assessment Unit (Amber Project) Family Resource Centre, Young People's Family Assistant and Support Team. Nasim has worked as a Consulting Social worker in the Youth Offending Service in offering advice to staff on safeguarding matters. Between 2011 July 2013 she managed one of the Locality Early Intervention Team / Children's Centre.

Nasim joined the Private Fostering team in July 2013. Her role is to ensure that all private fostering arrangements across the borough are notified to the team with regular support and monitoring taking place of the known private fostering arrangements.

Selam Al-Azar – (Private Fostering Social Worker) qualified as a social worker in 2010. Selam started her social work career in Canada in a team for children with special needs. Selam started with Newham Social Care in February 2015 in the Children In Needs Team and transferred to the Private Fostering Team in 2016.

## 7. Our vision for children and young people

Our vision as set out in the Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18 is to ensure each one of our 85,391 children and young people has the capacity skills, independence, health and resilience to meet the challenges of adult life in the 21st century.

### a. Awareness campaign

We have a duty to promote Private Fostering awareness throughout the borough to parents, people with parental responsibility, existing Private Foster carers, prospective Private Foster carers and the general public. This is to ensure potential and actual Private Fostering are aware of their responsibility to notify the local authority of the proposed or existing Private Fostering arrangement.

Our aim is for us to be aware of all Private Fostering arrangements within Newham.

We have two leaflets, one leaflet specific to children and young people in Private Fostering arrangements and the second leaflet aimed at parents and the carers outlining their responsibilities. These leaflets together with posters are distributed in contact centres, libraries, schools, community centres and GP surgeries and health centres throughout the borough. In addition, articles are placed in the Newham Mag twice a year, encouraging notification of potential Private Fostering arrangements.

The senior social worker with responsibility for Private Fostering will also attend in-house team meetings and health and education meetings to clarify what is a Private Fostering arrangement and ensure professionals are aware of the notification process. There is also a 'quick guide for professionals' detailing this.

We are increasing our links with other agencies such as schools, GP's surgeries and faith groups to ensure notifications increase through the targeted activity.

### b. Notifications

Under Regulation 4 (1) & (2) statutory requirements we will respond to all notifications of private fostering arrangements within 48 hours and complete any necessary initial assessments within 7 days.

### c. Assessment and monitoring of children in Private Foster Care

This part of the service is delivered through Safeguarding Duty Team.

Following notification of a Private Fostering arrangement within Newham, a referral will be made to our Safeguarding Assessment Services, who will carry out a Single Assessment to establish the risk of harm to the child, undertake local police checks (in consultation with the private fostering team), assess the child/s level of need and to ascertain their wishes and feelings as to their ongoing care and suitability of the care arrangement.

The social worker, in carrying out their Single Assessment, will notify the Private Fostering Service that a current assessment is underway regarding a possible Private Fostering arrangement.

The assessment process will conclude with a judgement about the level of need, which will determine whether the social worker will stay involved with the children and whether any support will be put in place.

If the arrangement is confirmed as being a private fostering arrangement, this will be communicated to the Private Fostering Service. The assessment team will also make every effort to confirm and ascertain the details and wishes of the child's parents or person identified with parental responsibility.

If the Single Assessment indicates that the child is 'in need' as defined by section 17 of the Children Act 1989, a social worker / Early Help Intervention worker will remain involved with the family to support and monitor the child/ren to achieve their aspirations and build resilience within the household and local community.

We are committed to the ongoing training and development of workers and safeguarding training is a priority. The ongoing training needs of the team are regularly reviewed.

#### d. Assessment and monitoring of Private Foster Care settings

This part of the service is delivered through Placement Services.

Assessment of the child's needs by the social worker will indicate whether the child's care arrangement may constitute a Private Fostering arrangement. For this to be confirmed, the case reviewed by the Fostering Team Manager. Cases where there are safeguarding concerns will remain within the Safeguarding Team until there are no longer safeguarding issues. All Private Fostering cases are reviewed by the Private Fostering panel that is held twice a year.

Where it is confirmed that a Private Fostering arrangement is in place, the Private Fostering Services will remain involved, and will carry out regular visits to the Private Foster setting. This will enable professionals from the private fostering team to ensure the child is safe and appropriately cared for within the arrangement and that the relevant advice and support is offered.

Where additional support needs are identified above those falling under the private fostering regulations, then consideration will be given to transferring the case to the relevant team where further assessment and intervention can be undertaken.

## 8. Better outcomes for our children

Being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health, and living a healthy lifestyle.

We will:

- Ensure the child's health is reviewed at each monitoring visit
- Ensure the child is registered with a local GP
- Ensure the child's immunisations are up to date
- Encourage the child to be taken for six monthly dental checks
- Encourage the child to visit the optician annually
- Ensure the carer provides a healthy diet for the child
- Confirm that contact with the child's birth family/person with parental responsibility remains positive, and
- Encourage the child to become involved in sporting activities.

Staying safe: being protected from harm and neglect.

We will:

- Ensure Private Foster carers and members of the household are assessed and are DBS checked
- Ensure the statutory visits are completed within timescales (6 weekly in the first year of the arrangement and 12 weekly in the second and subsequent years)
- Ensure the child is seen alone as part of the monitoring visit
- Ensure the Privately Fostered child is provided with their support worker's name and contact details
- Ensure that prompt action is taken when it is considered a child is living in an arrangement that puts them at risk

- Consider organising training courses for the private foster carers in conjunction with the Private Fostering Consortium or to link into the general foster carer training programme.

Enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood.

We will:

- Ensure the Private Foster Carer encourages and supports the child with their education
- Encourage children to attend extra curricular activities and attend targeted opportunities for academic development e.g. revision classes
- Ensure the child's school attendance is regular
- Encourage the Private Foster Carer to attend school open evenings.

Making a positive contribution: being involved with the community and society, and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour.

We will:

- Encourage the child to be involved in the decision making about their future
- Encourage the Private Foster Carer to promote positive relationships in the child's life and support them to participate in community and out-of-school activities
- Ensure the child's support worker regularly gathers the child's wishes and feelings
- Encourage the child to talk about concerns.

Achieving economic well-being: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

We will:

- Ensure children and young people are encouraged to think about further education and their future
- Encourage Private Foster Carers to promote the benefits of the child regularly saving money.

## **9. Comments and complaints**

If a comment or complaint about the service is received, it is the responsibility of the Team Manager of the relevant team will try to resolve any concerns raised by service users.

If the complaint cannot be resolved at this first stage, it may become necessary for the complaint to be formally registered with the

Complaints and Member Enquiries Team  
London Borough of Newham  
Newham Dockside  
1000 Dockside Road  
London E16 2QU

020 8430 2000  
corporate.complaints@newham.gov.uk

A copy of the leaflet setting out how to make a complaint is made available to applicants during their assessment.

If a child or young person makes a complaint about services provided for them, then the Children Act complaints procedure is followed. All children and young people can access an advocate via the Children's Rights Service. The Children's Rights Service will support children and young people in making complaints on their behalf and support them throughout the process of getting a solution.

Their contact details are:

Children's Rights Team  
134 Church Road  
Manor Park  
London E12 6HL

020 3373 1502  
0800 0131 650  
childrensrights@newham.gov.uk

## **10. Review and inspection**

Ofsted are responsible for the inspection of our Private Fostering Service.

The local Ofsted office responsible for inspecting our services is:

Ofsted South Region  
Freshford House  
Radcliffe Way  
Bristol BF1 6NL

08456 404040  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

## **11. Our contact details**

Newham Private Fostering Service are located in:

Fostering and Adoption Service  
London Borough of Newham  
Newham Dockside  
Second Floor, East Wing  
1000 Dockside Road  
London E16 2QU

Newham Council Telephone No: 020 8430 2000

Newham MASH Team No: 0203 373 4600

NEWHAM MASH SECURE EMAIL: [MASH@newham.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@newham.gcsx.gov.uk)

REFERRAL TO NEWHAM MASH PORTAL: [www.newham.gov.uk/mash](http://www.newham.gov.uk/mash)

Nasim Ahmed (Private Fostering Lead) [Nasim.ahmed@newham.gov.uk](mailto:Nasim.ahmed@newham.gov.uk)

Mark Thompson (Fostering Support Team /Private Fostering Team Practice Lead) [Mark.Thompson@newham.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Thompson@newham.gov.uk)

