****  **Practice Guidance for**

**Privately Fostering**

**Author: Anita Hiller, Practice Development Manager**

**Approver: Hayley Bodiam**

**Updated: September 2023**

**Date for review: September 2024**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Contents | Page |
| [Section 1 – What is Private Fostering?](#_Section_1_–) | 3 |
| [Section 2 - Liberi](#_Section_2_–) | 3 |
| [Section 3 - Action to be taken on receipt of notification](#_Section_3_-) | 5 |
| [Section 4 – Children from other countries](#_Section_4_–) (including Ukraine) | 7 |
| [Section 5 - Children subject to a Child in Need Plan or Child Protection Plan prior to becoming privately fostered](#_Section_5_–) | 9 |
| [Section 6 - Factors to be considered when completing an assessment of suitability](#_Section_6_-) | 11 |
| [Section 7 - Informing private foster carers of the outcome of the PFAAR](#_Section_7_–) | 13 |
| [Section 8 - Guidelines for interviews with referees (including transracial issues in Private Fostering)](#_Section_8_-) | 13 |
| [Section 9 - Notes on the assessment of premises](#_Section_9_-) | 16 |
| [Section 10 – Further information](#_Section_10_–) | 17 |

Practice Guidance for Privately Fostering

# Section 1 – What is Private Fostering?

A Private Fostering arrangement occurs when a child under 16 (or 18 if the child is disabled) is cared for and lives with an adult who is not a relative for 28 days or more.

The Children Act 1989 defines a relative as a step-parent (by marriage or civil partnership), grandparent, step grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt.

Private Fostering is a private arrangement made by the parent(s), (or those with parental responsibility) for someone to care for their child because they are unable to do so (permanently or temporarily). This may be due to parental ill health, a parent going abroad or into prison, a child being bought to the UK to study English, the relationship between the child and parent has broken down etc.

Parents and Private Foster Carers have a duty to inform the Local Authority regarding private fostering arrangements, but professionals need to recognise these arrangements and have a duty to inform the Local Authority.

# Section 2 – Liberi

Please contact Shakeela Chaudry (MIU) [shakeela.chaudry@kent.gov.uk](mailto:shakeela.chaudry@kent.gov.uk) or 03000 417048 for any support inputting PF work (assessments or Regulation 8 visits) on to Liberi or see the Liberi User Guide which can be accessed through SharePoint.

**Introduction**

This guidance aims to assist practitioners in carrying out the Child and Family assessment and Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record (PFAAR) to consider the suitability of the proposed placement and the suitability of the proposed carers and the premises.

**Practice process for new referrals concerning privately fostered children**

1. At initial referral/notification to Front Door Service (FDS) the outcome of the referral should be Private Fostering Agreement. By finalising and authorising this outcome, the Private Fostering Pathway will commence.
2. Following allocation to the Social Worker a Private Fostering Agreement must be completed. This confirms the notification date and Social Workers should input details of the proposed Private Foster Carers. The Social Worker needs to start the PFAAR at this stage.

**Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record (PFAAR)**

This assessment needs to be concluded within 42 days and progression should be addressed in the same way as a Child and Family assessment with support from the daily tracker. As with the Child and Family assessment, the timeliness of its completion should be determined by the needs of the individual child.

The information in the PFAAR can be used and elaborated upon with the Child and Family assessment should the child meet the criteria for a Child in Need service. It is important to remember the PFAAR is used to consider the suitability of the arrangement and the Child and Family assessment is used to undertake a holistic assessment of the child’s circumstances and will be particularly pertinent should the child be subject to a Child In Need or Child Protection Plan. Analysis in both assessments should be congruent to ensure that the reader is clear (whichever they read) of the plan for the child and any additional concerns/issues etc.

The PFAAR should conclude whether the proposed or actual arrangement is suitable.

Should the proposed or actual arrangement be deemed as suitable, the Social Worker would proceed with the Regulation 8 visits (please see policy) and would use the Visits under Regulation 8 form to evidence.

Case notes for Regulation 8 visits can be accessed via the Private Fostering pathway only - under Forms tab. NB. A Reg.8 form must be completed for **every** visit.

An initial visit to the child must be completed and recorded **within 7 days of notification** (referral) whether the child is in the proposed arrangement or not. For children who are abroad at the time of notification, a virtual visit can be set up and recorded on the child’s Liberi file, with a visit to the child within 7 days of arrival into the country. However, children from Ukraine must be visited **within 24 hours of arriving in the country**. For further information on this [See page 7.](#_Children_and_young)

**Process for Authorisation, Prohibition and/or Conditions of Private Fostering Arrangements**

1. Social Worker completes the PFAAR and finalises this.
2. The finalised form will go to the Team Manager’s tray for authorisation. The Team Manager should review the form and if further work is required, they finalise the record but Select “Request Further Information”, which will return the form to the Social Worker.
3. If the PFAAR is satisfactory and no further work is required, the Team Manager should reassign to the Integrated Family Service Manager for their approval.
4. The Service Manager will then authorise the form following the assessment being reviewed and ensuring all checks have been completed. If the DBS has not been received, it cannot be approved, even if overdue. Any suggested prohibitions or conditions must be authorised by the Area Director. The assessment and authorisation process should be completed within 42 days.

**Visit under Regulation 8 (See Liberi manual for guidance on inputting of this visit)**

Every visit should be completed on the Regulation 8 form and a case note.

The Social Worker must record whether the child was seen and if so, whether the child was seen alone.  If the child was not seen, the reasons must be recorded. The record must comment on the child's welfare and how the arrangement is progressing including any views expressed by the Private Foster Carer and the child. It must also contain a recommendation about the continued suitability of the Private Fostering arrangement and whether any action should be taken and/or requirements on the Private Foster Carer.

**Child and Family Assessment within the Private Fostering Process**

The Child and Family assessment should be an assessment that runs concurrently with the PFAAR if the child meets the criteria for Child in Need services. A C&F assessment/CIN Plan is only required in those circumstances. The Private Fostering pathway is a standalone pathway, ie the child can just be subject to Private Fostering Regulations.

**Annual Review of the arrangement**

The Social Worker should use the Word document “annual review of private fostering arrangements” (found in the Forms/Signs of Safety Practice Guidance in Tri-x) as an agenda guide for the child’s annual review. The minutes of the meeting should be added to the review section in the Private Fostering pathway/panel section.

# Section 3 - Action to be taken on receipt of notification

**New notifications on children not already open to a Children’s Social Work Team**

All initial information received about a proposed or actual Private Fostering arrangement will be processed through to the Front Door Service (FDS). The FDS will record the same core information as they would for any other referral, as well as asking for the specific information that is required under the Children Act Regulations. Where this information is not available, the FDS must explain this within their recording, confirm receipt of the notification in writing and pass the referral to the relevant Children’s Social Work Team.

Where it is clear that the new referral relates to a notification of a Private Fostering arrangement and there appears to be no Child Protection or complex Child in Need concerns, the Duty Senior will allocate the child to a Social Worker.

For children where the circumstances of the Private Fostering Arrangement are “straight forward”, e.g., language student with no additional needs, the Social Worker should complete the Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record (PFAAR) as a way to consider the child’s needs and the Private Foster Carer’s capacity to meet the child’s needs.

In those circumstances where the child is living within the Private Fostering arrangement and meets the criteria for Child in Needs services, then the Social Worker must also complete the Child and Family assessment record alongside the PFAAR.

The allocated Social Worker will carry out the following initial tasks within 7 working days of the notification:

1. Visit the Private Foster Carers in the home where the child is to live and speak to them and all members of the household (at times children may not yet be in the country. However, this visit must be completed regardless, to begin the assessment of the arrangement. Children should be visited as soon as possible following them arriving in the arrangement but must be **within 7 working days,** or if from Ukraine, **within 24 hours of arrival**.
2. Visit and speak to the child alone to ascertain their wishes and feelings in regard to the Private Fostering arrangement, unless the Social Worker considers it inappropriate to do so, in which case the reason should be recorded and brought to the attention of the Team Manager.
3. Speak to and, if possible, visit the parents/those with Parental Responsibility – this may mean getting details from language schools. Virtual calls can be used.
4. Ensure that the purpose and likely duration of the Private Fostering arrangement is understood by and agreed between the parents and the Private Foster Carers.
5. Ascertain the wishes and feelings of the child about the Private Fostering arrangement.
6. Check the suitability of the accommodation, the capacity of the Private Foster Carer to look after the child, the suitability of all other members of the Private Foster Carer's household.
7. Ensure that the parents are involved in planning for the child and explore whether the child's needs may be more appropriately met by providing services to the child and parent at home.
8. Encourage the parents to draw up a written agreement using the written agreement pro-forma in the KPON Forms/ Practice Guidance section) with the Private Foster Carers as to their respective expectations and responsibilities in relation to the Private Fostering arrangement including financial arrangements, medical arrangements, and the child's contact with his or her parents and other significant family members.
9. Both parents and Private Foster Carers should be given information about how to access support groups and independent advice and advocacy services, including relevant advice lines provided by organisations such as Parentline Plus [Family Lives](http://www.familylives.org.uk/) and [Child Law Advice](https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/private-fostering/).
10. Where the child has already started living with the Private Foster Carer, ensure that the child's development in all aspects is satisfactory, that the standard of care being given to the child is appropriate and that the child's needs arising from his or her religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background are being met.
11. Check that the financial matters are in order and the family time arrangements are working.
12. Notify the relevant health service, education setting, Ofsted and Probation Services of the child's being in the arrangement or proposed arrangement, including the Health Visiting Service if the child is of that age.
13. Ensure that any necessary links are or will be established with other agencies. For example, because of the child's disabilities and/or special educational needs.
14. Enter the child and the Private Foster Carer's details onto the electronic database.

Refer to Timeline for Social Workers undertaking a PFAAR to help with all the relevant forms.

The information gathered during this time should be collated using the PFAAR (and the Child and Family Assessment if necessary) on Liberi.

Written information in leaflet form should be provided to the child(ren) concerned, parents and prospective carers about private fostering. Leaflets can be found at [www.kscmp.org.uk](https://www.kscmp.org.uk/).

The information in the PFAAR can be used and elaborated upon with the Child and Family assessment if necessary. Analysis in both assessments should be congruent to ensure that the reader is clear (whichever they read) of the plan for the child and any additional concerns/issues.

# Section 4 – Children from other countries

There are times when we are notified early when international students will be living with a host family for more than 28 days and will therefore, be subject to a Private Fostering assessment. In these situations, the Children’s Social Work Service can arrange a virtual visit with the student and parents prior to arrival in the country. The virtual PF visit case note drop down can be used for this purpose. This will show that work has commenced on meeting and starting the assessment. NB. The student must be visited **within 7 days** of arriving at the Private Foster Carer’s home.

Social Workers should always be mindful of Modern Slavery when assessing any Private Fostering arrangement involving children entering these types of arrangements from abroad.

## Children and young people from Ukraine

Following the introduction of the Homes for Ukraine scheme in March 2022, the Home Office set up the Unaccompanied Minor (UAM) scheme on 15th July 2022.

The UAM details are as follows:

Children under 18 who are not travelling with or joining a parent or legal guardian are known as ‘eligible children’, where parental or legal guardian consent requirements are met. They will be supported under the Private Fostering arrangements until they are 18 years old.

Sponsors need to be personally known to the child’s parent or legal guardian and this relationship predates the conflict on 24th February 2022 (with some exceptional cases). Sponsors for eligible children would need to commit to provide accommodation and support, either:

* until they leave the UK
* for up to 3 years (the length of their visa)
* until they turn 18 years of age (and sponsorship has lasted for a minimum of 6 months) – whichever is soonest

Proposed sponsors are assessed for suitability using the Private Fostering Framework, with additional safeguarding checks. These must be completed prior to new visa applications. Further information on the checks can be found in [Guidance for councils about applications to Homes for Ukraine for children](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fhomes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils-children-and-minors-applying-without-parents-or-legal-guardians&data=05%7C01%7CAnna.Messinger%40kent.gov.uk%7Cfac9ca7d9ad7483ad77008db88f31194%7C3253a20dc7354bfea8b73e6ab37f5f90%7C0%7C0%7C638254350042872980%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=G1AaXSZbCHszGtfBctaPeq6%2FTzSBuqR1%2FKeFlHBvoq0%3D&reserved=0)

The sponsor is expected to inform the Local Authority once the child has arrived in the country as the Local Authority needs to arrange an initial visit to the child at the sponsor’s address **within 24** hours of arrival. This is to confirm the suitability of the living arrangements and establish any immediate welfare needs or concerns. **This includes where:**

**a) the child is living with a sponsor without a parent or legal guardian**

1. **the parent or legal guardian has given responsibility for day-to-day care of the child to an accompanying adult relative who the council did not meet in person prior to the child arriving in the UK**
2. **the accompanying adult relative with day-to-day caring responsibility is living with the child in self-contained accommodation, separate to the sponsor.**

Where scenarios b) and c) do not fit Private Fostering arrangements the Local Authority will give the child information about how to raise any concerns about their arrangement and has a duty to help them if they believe they are at risk.

Children arriving under the UAM scheme will be able to live in the UK for up to 3 years and access education, healthcare, benefits, employment (as appropriate under UK law) and other support.

Where a parent has applied to come to the UK with their children through the main Homes for Ukraine scheme, they must travel with them to the UK. They are made aware they must not leave their child in the care of a sponsor (or an accompanying adult relative) for 28 days or more or leave their child in the care of a sponsor (or an accompanying relative) for shorter periods on a regular basis. Where they are left with the sponsor under either of these circumstances, the practice guidance for Private Fostering needs to be followed.

If a sponsorship arrangement breaks down, the local authority must consult the parent to ascertain their wishes about arrangements for their child. This could include a rematch with a new sponsor in the UK. Any rematch of a child must **be led by the parent or legal guardian and the new prospective host should meet the relevant eligibility criteria for hosting an unaccompanied child – including that they are known to the parent or legal guardian with that relationship predating the conflict**. The same local authority checks as required for the original host would need to be completed for the new host before the child can move in with them, and parental consent obtained for the new arrangement. Further information on what should happen if a sponsorship arrangement breaks down, can be found in [Guidance for councils about applications to Homes for Ukraine for children](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fhomes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils-children-and-minors-applying-without-parents-or-legal-guardians&data=05%7C01%7CAnna.Messinger%40kent.gov.uk%7Cfac9ca7d9ad7483ad77008db88f31194%7C3253a20dc7354bfea8b73e6ab37f5f90%7C0%7C0%7C638254350042872980%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=G1AaXSZbCHszGtfBctaPeq6%2FTzSBuqR1%2FKeFlHBvoq0%3D&reserved=0)

# Section 5 – Children subject to a Child in Need Plan or Child Protection Plan prior to becoming privately fostered

If a child/young person is subject to Child in Need or Child Protection procedures when they enter a Private Fostering arrangement, the district team must allocate a Social Work Assistant (SWA) to work with the Private Foster Carer while the plan remains in place. This is subject the Private Foster Carer’s agreement. The SWA will provide support and guidance to the Private Foster Carer whilst the child remains subject to Child in Need or Child Protection. If a Social Work Assistant is not allocated, there needs to be a Management Oversight case note with the rationale recorded on the child and Private Foster Carer’s files.

Visits to the Private Foster Carer should be undertaken at least four weekly and recorded on the Private Foster Carer’s Liberi record using the Social Work Assistant’s Record of Visit to Private Foster Carers. This is a Liberi form which can be found on the Private Foster Carer’s Liberi record. A case note should be recorded on the child’s Liberi record and there is a drop down of SWA Visit to PF Carer. This should not include the discussion content (which should be filed on the for on the Private Foster Carer’s file only).

Whilst there is no expectation that the Social Work Assistant will spend time alone with the child (this will be completed by their allocated Social Worker), any discussion with the child or observations should be noted on the child’s file with the visit not counted as a statutory visit.

The role of the Social Work Assistant will be:

* To offer support and advice to the Private Foster Carer specific to the Private Fostering placement
* To enable the Private Foster Carer to contribute and understand the plans for the children for whom they are caring
* To undertake any key pieces of work with the Private Foster Carer, e.g. adolescent behaviour management
* To discuss issues relevant to contact with birth parents and other family members
* To assist Private Foster Carers in dealing with other relevant services and promoting the child’s health and education
* To undertake any key pieces of work identified by the Social Worker and in agreement with the Team Manager and/or Social Work Assistant co-ordinator in some districts
* To liaise with Social Worker regarding any issues which may impact on the child/young person
* To raise any safeguarding concerns to the Social Worker and Team Manager immediately. Escalate to the Service Manager if necessary.

The Private Foster Carer should be advised that discussions with the Social Work Assistant will be recorded on his/her Liberi record and will not be kept confidential from the allocated Social Worker.

The Social Work Assistant should communicate any concerns to the allocated Social Worker for the child.

When the child is no longer subject to any statutory work under Child in Need (remaining as a Privately Fostered child), the district may want to consider further support by the Social Work Assistant if deemed necessary (but this is not mandatory).

Joint supervision between the Social Work Assistant, Social Worker and Team Manager should be held quarterly to discuss the Private Fostering arrangement and recorded on the child’s Liberi file as per KCC Management Oversight and Supervision Policy. This is in addition to the child’s case supervision.

Safeguarding concerns -

If the Social Work Assistant identifies any concerns with the care being offered to the child within the Private Fostering arrangement, or the safety of the child in the Private Fostering arrangement, these MUST be raised with the Social Worker and Team Manager immediately. If safeguarding concerns are input on the Liberi form, this will send an alert to the Team Manager, but this should be followed up by the SWA to ensure concerns are being addressed.

NB. The requirement to allocate a Social Work Assistant to offer support to the Private Foster Carer does not relate to language school students living within a Private Fostering arrangement or any Private Fostering arrangements where a Child in Need/Child Protection Plan is not in place.

# Section 6 - Factors to be considered when completing an assessment of suitability

The following is intended to set a minimum standard of areas to be covered. It is not meant to be exhaustive.

There should be at least one visit on an occasion when the person undertaking the assessment can meet the entire household and explore the relationships of all members, the extent to which other members of the household may participate in the care and daily life of a child placed, and the demands that are made on the applicant(s) by other members of the household, such as elderly relatives requiring care.

It is important for the Social Worker undertaking the assessment to ensure that the Private Foster Carers are clear about the Local Authority's duties to determine:

* Their suitability and that of their household.
* The suitability of their accommodation.
* That neither would be prejudicial to the welfare of the child.
* That the arrangement(s) or proposed arrangements are likely to provide a safe and stable environment (in every sense) for the child.
* They should be clear about the need to make police and health inquiries, to take up references, the need to make a decision about suitability, the amount of support the Local Authority may provide, what they can do if the Local Authority exercises its powers to impose requirements or prohibitions etc.
* As well as the suitability of the accommodation, enquiries should cover access to schools, public transport and other amenities. If the private fostering of children with special needs is under consideration, is the location suitable for a child with restricted mobility for example? Are hospitals and special schools within easy reach?
* The person undertaking the PFAAR should make a point about communicating with the children of the family and learning something about their feelings concerning sharing their home and family with a new child. The impact of Private Fostering on family and social life should be carefully discussed and considered with the applicant(s).
* Where a Private Foster Carer has children by a previous marriage who are not living in the household, the extent of contact should be explored.
* What is the Private Foster Carer’s experience of caring for children of different age groups, including other people's children?
* How does employment/occupation affect family life? Are shifts worked? What time is available for family activities? Where the principal care-giver is employed outside of the home, what arrangements are available or proposed to ensure proper care for a child after school, during sickness and holidays?
* What is the standard of living and lifestyle of the family? What are the family's leisure interests and activities?

The following agency checks MUST be completed:

**DBS** – checks should be carried out for someone who is Privately Fostering or proposing to privately foster a child and all members of his household aged over 16 years. The actual or proposed Private Foster Carer and each member of his household aged over 16 should be asked to provide written consent for such a check to be carried out.

The DBS does not support portable DBS checks (i.e., checks completed by other organisations) so new DBS applications should always be completed when assessing prospective Private Foster Carers. The assessing Social Workers should contact the DBS team by emailing employment.check@kent.gov.uk to arrange to become identification verifiers. However, some districts have a designated person to undertake DBS checks.

In line with Kent’s Fostering Policy, those Private Foster Carers that are often caring for children in Private Fostering arrangements (i.e., host families) should have new or updating DBS checks every three years.

**LIBERI CHECK** – checks of Liberi are necessary to check whether the proposed or actual Private Foster Carer or any member of his household is/has been known to social care services (and liaise with other local authorities if the proposed Private Foster Carer has only been in the present local authority area for a short-time).

It is particularly important that the Private Foster Carer’s electronic file is checked in order to ascertain whether they have Privately Fostered children before and whether they have been prohibited from doing so in the past.

**OFSTED** - information from Ofsted is necessary to ensure the Private Foster Carer has not had a child-minding registration refused or cancelled.

**PROBATION** – information from Probation Services is necessary to ensure they are not disqualified from being Private Foster Carers due to past activities or offences.

**PERSONAL REFERENCES** - two personal references should be obtained and should be subject to follow up interviews/conversations which should be recorded on Liberi.

**PRIVATE FOSTER CARER’S GP** – information regarding the health of the proposed Private Foster Carer

**LETTER TO PRIVATE FOSTER CARERS CHILD/REN’S EDUCATION/HEALTH PROVISION** – information from the Private Foster Carer’s child/ren’s education provision and/or health visitor/school nurse is necessary to help the Social Worker gain a view of the quality of care the birth child of the Private Foster Carer is receiving.

In the event of a refusal of any person to cooperate with the making of the necessary checks, the Social Worker should advise the private foster carers that as the required assessment cannot be completed, they cannot be recommended as suitable. In these circumstances, the Social Worker must advise the parents of the need to make alternative arrangements for their child.

# Section 7 – Informing private foster carers of the outcome of the PFAAR

When PFAAR’s are positive and a Service Manager has agreed that the arrangement is appropriate, the Social Worker should write to the Private Foster Carer formally to inform them that this is the case using A Letter to Private Foster Carer regarding assessment (PF09a - copy on Tri-x). A copy of the letter should also be sent to the child’s parents.

If an arrangement is not deemed suitable, reasons for the findings should be sent in writing to the proposed/Private Foster Carer and the reasons clearly noted on the proposed/Private Foster Carer’s electronic file.

The child's parents should be fully informed and advised to remove the child from the Private Fostering arrangement.

**For information on Prohibition, Requirements and Disqualification see policy 4.1.3.**

# Section 8 - Guidelines for interviews with referees (including transracial issues in Private Fostering)

The following points are intended to guide staff in interviews with prospective Private Foster Carers. However, many of the points may be relevant in relation to interviews concerning Private Foster Carers.

**General**

The two main referees should not be related to the applicants. Formal character references are not required, e.g., from an employer. Referees should know the applicant (both applicants if a couple) and their family well and visit them in their home.

If a husband and wife are named together and only one is interviewed the other should be asked to confirm her or his views in writing. If the referees are a couple, then a separate reference should also be sought from an independent source.

Establish:

1. How long they have known the applicants and in what capacity?
2. Whether they know anything which suggests that the applicants are not suitable people to be entrusted with the care of a child
3. Whether the applicants discussed with their referee(s) their application to foster.
4. Whether they have seen the applicants with their own children? The referee’s children (if any) and other people's children?
5. What comments they may have about how they relate to children, such as how children respond.
6. Establish whether the referee(s) considers that the applicant(s) is suitable to care for a child in respect of their:

* Temperament and character.
* Health.
* Capacity for firm but kind handling.

1. In the case of joint applicants, establish whether the referee considers applicants' relationship a sound and happy one? How does the referee consider they cope with stress?
2. What type of lifestyle do they have in the opinion of the referee (routine, flexibility, etc.)?
3. Gain the referee's opinion on communication within the applicant(s) family/household?
4. Establish whether they think the applicant(s) appreciate the implications of Private Fostering:

* Implications for work with natural parents?
* Implications for their own children?

1. Ask if the referee(s) knows anything on the attitude of the applicant(s) wider family circle towards fostering?
2. Would the referee leave their own child with the applicant(s)?
3. Do they have any other observations or reservations?

Social workers should use referee form (PF11), to be completed by referees.

A conversation should be had with the referees around how their information will be shared with the proposed Private Foster Carer.

**Transracial Issues in Private Fostering**

Some Private Fostering arrangements will involve black and minority ethnic children placed in white families. The following offers some key points to consider in evaluating the approach to issues of race and culture in the Private Foster Carer’s home. It should not be forgotten that these points apply equally to the staff who are conducting the assessment, and that the Culturally Competent Care Policy and Guidance provides the framework for practice.

Private Foster Carers should:

1. Have a genuine understanding of why parents use Private Fostering.
2. Be able to understand and truly accept why the term 'black' is positively preferred and not "coloured" and be able to use the term 'black' comfortably.
3. Have a good awareness of racism and its roots.
4. Be able to understand and accept that racism is a reality for BME children (and adults, i.e., their parents), that this has negative and damaging effects on the emotional, psychological, and educational development on the child and be prepared to deal with it.
5. Have some knowledge of the relevant ethnic culture and history or a willingness to gain this knowledge.
6. Have an ability to genuinely view the specific culture(s) positively in order to help the child develop a positive identity and pride in being black (and African, for example). This together with an understanding of the negative effects of racism and preparedness to deal with it are essential components of good parenting and preparation of a child to cope with the real world.
7. Be able to communicate and reinforce positive black history, specific and other culture(s) when discussing or working with a black child on issues, identity and racism.
8. Have knowledge of and be able to use positive black images and role models in society in order to combat the negative images a black child receives and internalises. For example, through public figures, the media, language, posters, multi-racial books, and books written for BME children.
9. Be able to encourage and enhance positive black identity, willingness to further develop a positive black identity for the child. For example, by taking an interest the child's culture, contact with cultural events, other black children and families, community groups.
10. Have knowledge of hair and skin care and dietary needs of black children, where applicable, these are not special but different needs and are essential to the child feelings about his/herself.
11. Be willing to work in partnership with parents in attempts to keep the bond between parent and child intact.
12. Be willing to engage other agencies, for example, health visitors, doctors, schools, in meeting any specific health needs of BME children.
13. Be able to identify when assistance is needed in meeting discrimination and racism experienced by the child (rather than the belief in "all children being treated alike" or "do not judge people).
14. Be able to provide the child with skills and techniques for living in a racist society.

Some important questions to cover within the assessment would be:

1. Do the carers have BME friends or contacts in order to further the child's identity.
2. Are they likely to be able to deal with conflict about race within and outside the family?
3. What are the attitudes of neighbours and wider family to their children mixing with a BME child? What are the attitudes of local schools and their expectations of BME pupils?
4. Do the carers understand the child’s self-esteem, or sense of identity may have been adversely affected if he/she experienced rejection on the basis of racism and can they deal with this?
5. Are they willing and able to provide child with balanced view of different cultures?

# Section 9 - Notes on the assessment of premises

The following factors will be of relevance in assessing the suitability of the accommodation, particularly if the Private Fostering arrangement concerns a young child or children:

1. The home should be kept in a clean and hygienic condition.
2. The home should be free from hazards and should be reasonably well organised, with sufficient storage for toys and play equipment.
3. The bedroom(s) used for the child(ren) should be well lit with both natural and artificial light available and well ventilated.
4. There should be sufficient space available for children to play in.
5. Where there is no safe outside play space, the carer should make arrangements to take the children to local playgrounds or parks regularly.
6. There should be provision for the hygienic storage, preparation, cooking and serving of food, and where appropriate adequate provision for the sterilisation of feeding bottles and utensils and the preparation of baby food.
7. There should be provision for first aid.
8. There should be a suitable range of toys and play equipment or other equipment necessary for the care of the child(ren).
9. The home should show adequate consideration for the safety of a child (e.g., stairgates, fireguards, protection from electrical sockets or garden ponds where there are young children).
10. Medicines and tablets and other dangerous articles should be kept out of reach from young children.
11. Matches, knives, razor blades and household cleaners should be kept out of reach of children.
12. Windows, doors, and cupboards should be secured against young children opening them unsupervised.
13. If young people are transported by car BS approved restraints should be used as required by statute.
14. Garages and garden sheds should be secured, dangerous tools and pesticides etc stored safely.

# Section 10 – Further information

Each district has a Private Fostering Lead who you can go to for advice. In addition, you can get advice from:

Anna Messinger, Social Work Standards Officer – [anna.messinger@kent.gov.uk](mailto:anna.messinger@kent.gov.uk)

Anita Hiller, Practice Development Manager – [anita.hiller@kent.gov.uk](mailto:anita.hiller@kent.gov.uk)

Additional information about children and young people from Ukraine who are not travelling with or joining their parent or legal guardian (updated 9th June 2023):

[Guidance for councils about applications to Homes for Ukraine for children](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fhomes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils-children-and-minors-applying-without-parents-or-legal-guardians&data=05%7C01%7CAnna.Messinger%40kent.gov.uk%7Cfac9ca7d9ad7483ad77008db88f31194%7C3253a20dc7354bfea8b73e6ab37f5f90%7C0%7C0%7C638254350042872980%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=G1AaXSZbCHszGtfBctaPeq6%2FTzSBuqR1%2FKeFlHBvoq0%3D&reserved=0)

[Homes for Ukraine guidance for sponsors](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fhomes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-sponsors-children-and-minors-applying-without-parents-or-legal-guardians&data=05%7C01%7CAnna.Messinger%40kent.gov.uk%7Cfac9ca7d9ad7483ad77008db88f31194%7C3253a20dc7354bfea8b73e6ab37f5f90%7C0%7C0%7C638254350043029181%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=U%2FGdFZYQ%2FM76zEJcCSlTHtl1%2Bcs1DrLPRpR6%2FfoAuZo%3D&reserved=0)