

Private Fostering Statement of Purpose 2026-2027

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Description *Statement of Purpose to outline the services delivered by Worcestershire County Council.*

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Private Fostering Statement of Purpose 2026

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Introduction

All Local Authorities have a duty to publish a written Statement of Purpose in respect of its private fostering service in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering (Standard 1) which sets out its duties and functions in relation to Private Fostering and the ways in which they will be carried out

Worcestershire County Council (WCC) carries out these duties and functions and recognises the importance of ensuring that children and young people are in Private Fostering arrangements which are stable and where children and young people are happy, healthy, and safe. Children and young people in Private Fostering arrangements should be valued, supported, and encouraged to grow and develop as individuals with access to good health and educational services.

This Statement of Purpose sets out how WCC will comply with the principles outlined in the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005, the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005, the Replacement Children Act Guidance on Private Fostering and the Children Act 2004. It sets our aims and objectives; the way we raise awareness of private fostering requirements to increase notifications; assess the suitability of these arrangements and support children, young people their families and private foster carers.

It aims to provide comprehensive information and guidance for staff, children and young people and their families and professionals.

What is Private Fostering?

The legal definition of a privately fostered child is provided in the **Children Act 1989**.

A privately fostered child is a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) who is cared for, or it is proposed to be cared for, and provided with accommodation by someone other than

- a parent of his/ hers
- a person who is not his or her parent but who has parental responsibility for him/her



- a close relative of his/hers (Close relative is defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership)).

and he/she has been cared for and accommodated by that person for 28 days or more

or the period of actual fostering is less than 28 days, but the private foster carer intends to foster him/her for a period of 28 days or more.

A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for him/her has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for any longer period. Arrangements are deemed to be private fostering if they meet the criteria cited above, **whether or not there is monetary or other reward.** (Exemptions are set out in *Schedule 8* of the *Children Act 1989*).

The period for which the child is cared for and accommodated by the carer should normally be continuous, but it should be noted that the continuity is not broken by occasional short breaks. In this Act 'parent' includes an unmarried father.

It is an arrangement between the child's parent (or a person who has PR) and the private foster carer where the parent\carer retains PR.

The following placements would not be private fostering arrangements

- Step parent where they are married\civil partnership with the child or young person's parent even though the parent is not a member of the household
- Grandparent
- Step Grandparent where they are in a marriage\civil partnership with a grandparent even though the grandparent is not a member of the household
- Aunt\uncle
- Step aunt\uncle where they are in a marriage\civil partnership with an aunt\uncle even when the aunt\uncle is not part of the household
- Sibling
- Step Sibling where the respective parents are in a marriage\civil partnership

The following placements would be private fostering arrangements

- Parent's partner where there has been no marriage\civil partnership and the parent has left the household



- Partner of grandparents, aunts and uncles where there is no marriage\civil partnership
- Great grandparents, Great aunt\uncle
- Cousins
- Individuals who the child\young person may consider a sibling because they grew up together, but their parents were not in a marriage\civil partnership.
- Family Friend

Examples of privately fostered children are:

- A teenager who lives with a friend's family because of a breakdown in relationships at home.
- A child being cared for by a distant relative.
- A young person who is brought into the country by an "agent" and lives with a family not previously known to him.
- A child who comes into the country for education at a boarding school and stays with a guardian during the summer holiday, or with a host family for the length of a language course.

Values and principles

WCC is committed to ensuring that all children and young people are happy, healthy and safe. It recognises and acknowledges the vulnerability of many privately fostered children and young people and the difficulties that may be inherent in their home and private fostering situation or circumstances. WCC will ensure that private fostering arrangements are safe and suitable for children and young people and children and young people in such arrangements are protected from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

WCC will ensure that children, young people and carers are assessed and supported on the basis of the needs of the child or young person concerned regardless of any person's circumstances, background, status or personal attributes.

WCC will seek to work in partnership with children, young people and their families and private foster carers in order to safeguard children and young people in private fostering arrangements, and ensure that their health, material, emotional, social and cultural needs are being met.

WCC will ensure that the child/young person in a private fostering arrangement is seen, that his or her voice is heard and his/her views, wishes, and feelings are taken into account with regard to the private fostering arrangement.

WCC will consult with and advise colleagues within Worcestershire County Council, and appropriate external organisations or agencies, regarding the needs of children who are privately fostered, and seek to work in partnership with these to ensure an optimum service is delivered to children, parents, and private foster carers.

Notifying WCC

WCC should be notified of all private fostering arrangements by

- A parent or any person who has parental responsibility for a child who is going to be privately fostered.
- Any person who intends to privately foster a child notified at least six weeks prior to the intended start of the placement. If the placement is due to start within six weeks, the person should notify WCC immediately.
- A person who is already privately fostering a child. If the person has not notified the relevant local authority, they must do so immediately.
- Any person who is involved directly or indirectly in arranging for a child to be privately fostered such as an agency providing host families for overseas students
- Education, health and other professionals have a duty to notify the local authority of a private fostering arrangement that comes to their attention if they are not satisfied that the parent or carer has notified the local authority

Notifications should be made to the Family Front Door Tel Number [01905 822666](tel:01905822666)
Staff are available Monday to Thursday from 9.00am to 5.00pm and Fridays from 9.00am to 4.30pm.

Leaflets are available at [Private fostering | Worcestershire County Council](#)

What is a Private Fostering Assessment?

Once WCC has received a notification Under Section 44 of the Children Act 2004 it has a duty to assess the capacity of the proposed or actual private foster carer to look after the child or young person and the suitability of household members, and determines whether the child who is, or is proposed to be, privately fostered poses any risk of harm to children already living in the private foster carer's household, and whether those children pose a risk of harm to him. Set out below is WCC's procedure for assessing Private Fostering arrangements and its assessment standards.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Kinship teams in the fostering services have responsibility for the assessment of the Private Fostering household, with the Family Front Door and Locality Safeguarding teams assessing the needs of the child. There is joint visits when possible, from workers from both Kinship teams and the Children's team, to gather and identify the needs of the child or young person and the ability of the carers to meet these. The combined analysis is captured in one report and agreement that it is a suitable arrangement is given by the Group Manager.

When the outcome of the assessment is that the child or young person is a child requiring a Child in Need or a Child Protection Plan, they are allocated a Social Worker in the Children's Safeguarding team in line with other Children in Need or children subject to Child Protection Plans and will receive support and assistance according to their assessed needs.

When the assessment is that the child or young person does not need to be on a plan, the Private Fostering arrangement is monitored by the Kinship teams. Children, young people and their carers will be visited as set out in the Private Fostering Regulations. If concerns arise about the suitability of the private fostering arrangement, then a referral will be made to the Family Front Door for further assessment on whether a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan is needed.

Private foster carers can access the suite of training available for approved Foster Carers.

Where a private foster carer wishes to care for more than 3 unrelated children this will be agreed by the manager of the fostering and kinship service.

Every privately fostered child or young person will have an allocated social worker who will carry out statutory visits and whom they and their carers can contact for support and assistance.

Although the private foster carer becomes responsible for the day to day care of the child or young person (with parental agreement), and consequently must safeguard and promote their welfare, the primary responsibility for the child remains with the parent (or person with parental responsibility) and this includes financial responsibility.

Assessment Practice Standards

The Private Fostering Assessment should be completed **within 30 working days** of notification and should examine, among other matters:

- that the duration of the private fostering arrangement is understood by, and agreed between, the parents of the child (or any person with parental responsibility) and the proposed/actual private foster carer
- the wishes and feelings of the child about the proposed/actual arrangement (considered in the light of their age and understanding)
- the suitability of the (proposed) accommodation



- the capacity of the proposed/actual private foster carer to look after the children of the household, including other children already resident. This includes DBS checks of the carer and household members and medical checks of the private foster carers
- the suitability of other members of the proposed/actual private foster carer's household, including other children already resident
- the proposed/existing arrangements for contact between the child and his or her parents, any other person with parental responsibility for him or her, and other persons who are significant to him or her, and if already taking place, whether such contact is satisfactory for the child
- that the parents of the child, or any other person with parental responsibility for him or her, have agreed financial arrangements for the child (and if the child is already placed whether these arrangements are working)
- that consideration has been given to, and necessary steps taken, to make arrangements for care of the child's health, including registration with a new GP necessary
- that consideration has been given to, and arrangements made for, the child's education
- how decisions about the day to day of the child will be/are taken
- that, where the child is already being cared for by the private foster carer, his or her physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development is appropriate and satisfactory
- that, where the child is already being cared for by the private foster carer, his or her needs arising from his religious persuasion, racial origin, and cultural and linguistic background are being met
- whether the private foster carer, the parents of the child, any other person with parental responsibility for the child, or any other person concerned with the child are being given such advice as appears to the authority to be needed

Visiting Standards

WCC seeks to respond to all Private Fostering Notifications **within 7 working days**

1. Regulation 4 Visit

- where notification of a proposal to privately foster a child has been received in advance, there are specific requirements that need to be completed in accordance with Regulation 4(1) of The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005
- the following must be completed **within 7 working days**:
 - visit the premises where it is proposed that the child will be cared for and accommodated
 - visit and speak to the proposed private foster carer and to all members of the household
 - visit and speak to the child whom it is proposed will be privately fostered, alone. (An interpreter should always be used where the child's preferred language is not English)



- speak to and, if it is practicable to do so, visit the parents of, or other person with parental responsibility for, the child

2. Regulation 7 Visit

- where Worcestershire County Council receive a Notification about a child who is already being privately fostered, there is a requirement under Regulation 7(1) which must be completed within 7 working days:
 - visit and speak to the private foster carer and to all members of his household
 - fostering arrangement (An interpreter should always be used where the child's preferred language is not English.)
 - speak to and, where practicable, visit the parents, or other person with parental responsibility for the child
 - evidence of consent by parents for the child to be privately fostered and agreement by the private foster carer must be obtained

3. Subsequent Visits – Regulation 8 Visits

- the privately fostered child must be seen **every 30 working days** under Regulation 8 of the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005
- the first Reg 8 visit must be completed **30 working days** after the Regulation 7 visit
- during the first year/ 12 months of the private fostering arrangements, the child must be seen **every 30 working days**
- from year 2 onwards, the child will be seen every **60 working days**.

Raising Awareness

The Fostering and Kinship service has responsibility to raise awareness of Private Fostering and the notification requirements, on behalf of WCC, in a number of ways.

Website: Information on Private Fostering and notifications is available at [Private fostering | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Leaflets: WCC has leaflets for children and young people, professionals and private foster carers. They are also available at the website above.

Multi – agency safeguarding training: Information and the professional leaflet is available.

Information Sessions: Team Manager with lead responsibility regularly attends team meetings and holds workshops for WCC staff.

Working with Education: presentation to Designated Safeguarding leads for schools in Worcestershire. Letter to schools explaining Private Fostering and reminding them with their duty to notify.

Agencies providing Host Families: Liaison with agencies which provide host families for children and young people from abroad accessing education.

WCC recognises that although notification of Private Fostering arrangements is required there are concerns that it is underreported, and it is difficult to obtain reliable figures on the number of children and young people in Private Fostering arrangements. The awareness raising strategy is under continuous review to evaluate effectiveness and consider new ways that it can raise awareness with professionals and the public.

Monitoring Private Fostering Arrangements.

Advice and Support: Geraldine O' Donnell, Kinship Care & Support Team Manager is the lead manager with responsibility for Private Fostering for WCC and can offer advice and support. Please contact godonnell@worcestershire.gov.uk or on 07850949234.

Assessments: All assessments are completed on the WCC electronic records and signed off by the responsible Group Manager if they are satisfied that it is a suitable arrangement. If the Group Manager has concerns about the suitability of the arrangement, then legal advice will be sought.

Visits: Write up of visits are recorded on WCC electronic recording system and are reported on in the Private Fostering dashboard which assists team managers to monitor timescales.

Overall monitoring and Annual Report: The Team Manager with lead responsibility for Private Fostering and Group Manager for the Fostering & Kinship service have responsibility for the overall monitoring of the service and the preparation of the annual report.

Inspection: Private Fostering is inspected by Ofsted as part of their inspection of Children's Social Care who can be contacted in the following ways

Address: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Compliments and Complaints: Compliments and complaints can be sent to

Worcestershire County Council

Consumer Relations

County Hall

Spetchley Road

Worcester

WR5 2 NP

Telephone: [01905 844096](tel:01905844096)

Private Fostering and Homes For Ukraine

As a result of the war in Ukraine families across England have welcomed Ukrainian families into their homes under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The Homes for Ukraine Scheme outlines the role of councils across England in supporting the scheme.

In addition to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme for families coming to the UK, in July 2022 the government published guidance for councils to accept applications for children and minors under 18 years travelling to the UK without their parents or legal guardian. This included young people who were travelling with an accompanying adult

The children travelling to the UK under this scheme will be processed under the private fostering regulations and are assessed by the Kinship fostering team alongside the family front door and support provided until young people are 18 years old.

Guidance for Councils regarding unaccompanied minors from Ukraine (UAM) is detailed at:

[Homes for Ukraine: Guidance for councils \(children and minors applying without parents or legal guardians\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils-children-and-minors-applying-without-parents-or-legal-guardians)