Private Fostering Annual Report

April 2026 – March 2027



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Introduction

This report is a statutory requirement laid down in the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering (July 2005). It provides an overview of Private Fostering in Kent from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. It should be read alongside the Kent's Private Fostering Statement of Purpose which sets out the minimum standards and expectations for managing private fostering arrangements in Kent.

A private fostering arrangement is one made privately (without the involvement of the local authority) for the care of a child by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention it should last for 28 days or more.

A privately fostered child is defined in the Children Act 1989 as a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if the child has disabilities) who is cared for and provided with accommodation for 28 days or more by someone who is not the child's parent, or close relative, or someone with parental responsibility. It is a private arrangement between parent and 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 private foster carer should be continuous, but continuity is not broken by the occasional short break, i.e., the child stays with parent for a weekend.

The private foster carer becomes responsible for providing the day-to-day care of the child promoting and safeguarding their welfare. Overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the privately fostered child remains with the parent or other person with parental responsibility. This is a private arrangement between parent and carer.

The local authority has a duty to satisfy itself the welfare of children who are privately fostered in Kent is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, and to ensure such advice is given to those caring for them as appears to be needed. Local Authorities do not formally approve or register private foster carers.

The Children Act 2004 places duties on local authorities to:

- Raise awareness.
- Make enquiries about the suitability of private foster carers wherever possible before children are cared for by them.
- Undertake an assessment of the child's needs.
- Appoint a Private Fostering officer to monitor compliance with the notification system.

- Include Private Fostering amongst the areas to be addressed by safeguarding boards.
- Introduce minimum standards for Local Authority Private Fostering.

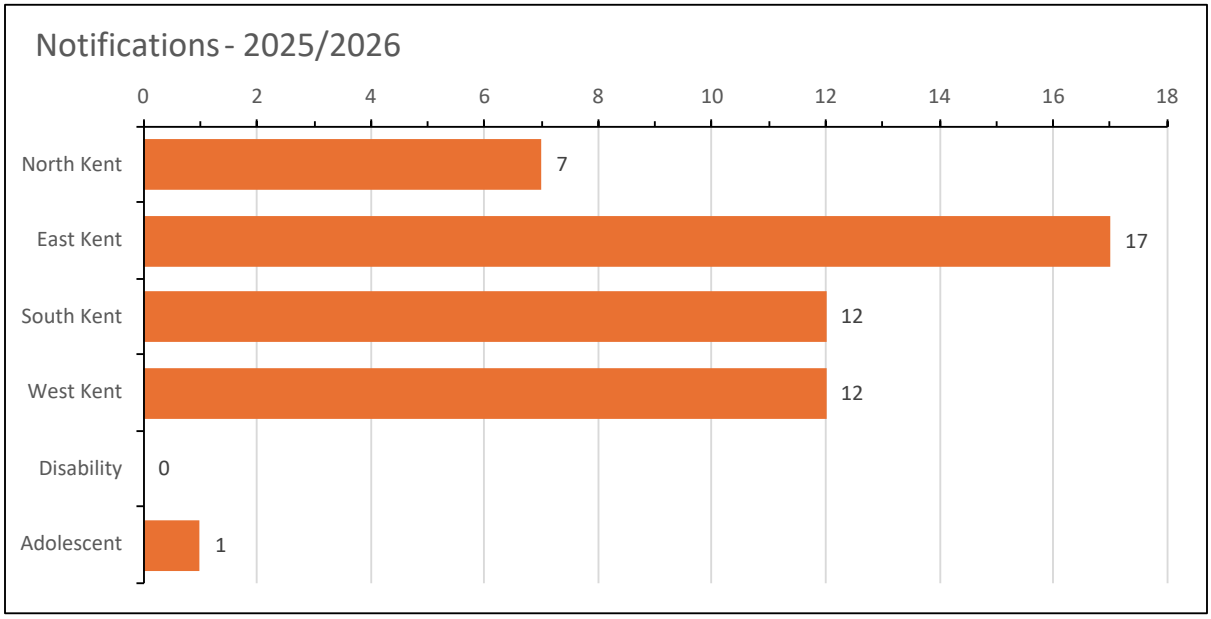
To support our practice with privately fostered children, Kent has a Private Fostering Lead Officer and Social Work Standards Officer who support practice across the county; Private Fostering Leads in each district social work team and Business Support Leads to assist administration. 'Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums' are held with these leads every two months to teach, support and disseminate good practice across the county.

Private Fostering Data

Notifications

In 2025–2026, Kent received 49 new private fostering notifications, representing a 22.5% increase compared to the previous year (40 notifications). This rise indicates a return to previous levels. It is difficult to state emphatically why there is an increase as this is likely due to several reasons including higher numbers of children from other countries studying in Kent, impact of awareness raising, and internal processes, such as out Good Practice Forums and Lead roles in each district having a positive impact.

Graph 1 – Notifications Received by Area April 2025–March 2026



38 private fostering arrangements started between April 2025 to March 2026. There are fewer peak periods across the year compared to previous years, with only slight

increases in April 2025 (6), August 2025 (5) and January 2026 (5). There are usually peaks in particular months due to English Language students or internationals students in secondary schools so the figures this year reflect a decline in these students. The increases could also coincide with school holidays when families experience increased pressures, including financial.

From a national perspective, trends in private fostering notifications should be interpreted with caution. Since 2015, the Department for Education has not collected national private fostering data, meaning there is no comprehensive England-wide dataset against which local authority activity can be benchmarked.

The Coram BAAF Private Fostering Survey 2025 received responses from 61 local authorities, 61% of whom reported between 1 and 20 notifications. The survey highlights that nationally many privately fostered children remain unknown to Children's Services, with notifications most commonly initiated by professionals rather than by parents or carers themselves.

Graph 1 shows notifications the area variations. Strengthening Independence Service (recorded as Disability) had zero arrangements. This is not unusual as the significant needs of children with disabilities make it difficult for them to be looked after by friends or family, so less likely to be privately fostered and more likely to access short breaks care or residential settings.

There has been a small decrease in notifications from the Adolescent Service. Adolescents are generally the age group most likely to move to these type of arrangements so it is important that workers within the Adolescent Service are aware of private fostering and curious about adolescents who may be privately fostered but have not been notified to the local authority. This continues to be part of our plan to raise awareness.

The spread of notifications across areas varies slightly and indications of increased notifications take place where English Language Schools are situated.

Source of Private Fostering Notification

Notifications from Education, particularly from secondary schools, have recovered to some extent from 38% (7) in 2024/2025 to 43% (10) in 2025/2026. There has been a slow and steady return from international students attending secondary schools on a year's programme so this may account for the slight increase.

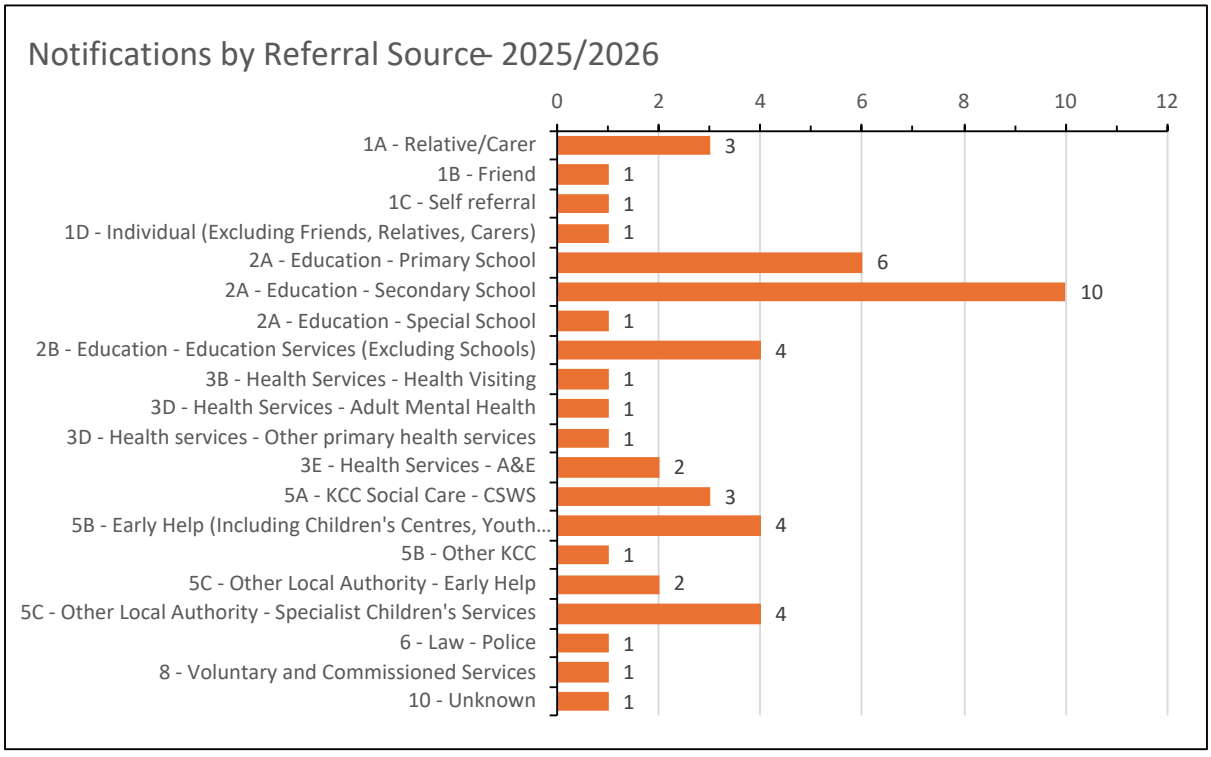
Although the increase is promising, it continues to indicate a need to maintain awareness raising within the education sector schools, as students in private fostering arrangements are vulnerable and need their needs and safety need to be assessed.

Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums are internal meetings attended by Practice Fostering Leads. The Forum has discussed concerns including occasions when English Language Schools fail to notify the local authority when overseas students are placed with hosts for more than 28 days. This can lead to issues resulting in hosts becoming very frustrated when they become aware of the requirements of private fostering assessments and checks. Leads notify the Private Fostering Officer of any issues, who makes contact with the school to help them understand their duties under the legislation.

Notifications from Early Help have decreased slightly from 6 in 2024/2025 to 4 in 2025/2026, although this still is a slight, change, numbers are still higher than previous years. Notifications from Children's Social Work Services increased slightly from 1 in 2024/25 to 3 in 2025/2026. This low number of notifications is concerning as it may indicate children not being identified in these arrangements and increased risk for this vulnerable cohort of children.

Referrals from other local authorities remained relatively consistent with 5 notifications in 2024/2025 to 6 in 2025/2026.

Graph 2 – Referrals by source



Ethnicity, Nationality, Age and Sex

Most children continue to be White British (59.2% from the UK) but of the 38 arrangements initiated, only half had the child's nationality recorded. This indicates that consistent recording of nationality is not yet fully embedded in practice despite work to improve this.

Notifications were again weighted towards the adolescent age band of 12 to 15, with a similar number of females (49%) to males (51%). This is similar to previous years. There were 10 notifications for children 11 years and younger (9 in 2024-2025). private fostering arrangements are only suitable for younger children for a limited period of time. Stable permanent plans should be sought if there is no plan for the child to return home. In the majority of situations for younger children, they return home or go on to kinship care arrangements. In 2025-2026, the private fostering arrangement ended for 2 children due to legal orders being obtained and securing permanence for them.

Permanency planning is monitored within moderations of audits and within the Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums.

Private Fostering Assessments and Annual Reviews

The Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record (PFAAR) should be completed within 42 days. Of the 42 PFAARs commenced in 2025/2026, 30 were completed within that period but only one was completed within the required 42-day timescale.

Delays in receiving Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are consistently identified by Service Managers as the primary reason for assessments not being completed within timescales. To help mitigate risk during these delays, alternative checks, such as police checks, are undertaken. In addition, Social Workers are regularly reminded of the importance of applying for DBS checks as early as possible. However, progress is often dependent on Private Foster Carers providing the necessary information promptly. This has been further impacted by changes to the DBS process, which now require applicants to present identification documents in person to the system approver, adding additional logistical challenges.

There is no available data to indicate how many parents were consulted as part of the PFAAR process to capture their views on the private fostering arrangement. This is a requirement and consideration needs to be given about how we could access this data in future.

Service Managers are required to authorise Private Fostering Assessments and Annual Reviews. In 2025/2026, 12 private fostering Annual Reviews were completed but issues with authorisation were identified in all but 4 of these Reviews. The 4 were authorised correctly by the Service Manager but some authorisations were complete by Team Managers. The Annual Reviews require the Review to be reassigned to the Service Manager. This has not happened in all instances or there have been recording errors, such as Service Manager oversight on one sibling but not the other. se issues included. Of these, 4 were authorised by a Service Manager and 4 were authorised by a Team Manager. The other reviews, either had no manager recorded, although in one of these instances the Service Manager had authorised the sibling's review, suggesting this may be a recording error. It was concerning that for one review, there was no manager authorisation. The sign off process for the Annual Review on Liberi does not currently include a prompt for the Team Manager to re-assign to the Service Manager for them to review and authorise the Annual Review. This process will be reviewed and a prompt added to Liberi to ensure more consistent sign off of the Private Fostering Annual Review going forward.

It is positive that the majority of annual reviews had management oversight recorded by either Team Manager or Service Manager which ensures that oversight, challenge and accountability have been applied. However, greater consistency is required in ensuring that Service Managers provide oversight and authorise all arrangements.

Visits to Children

Each Private Fostering visit is recorded on a statutory Regulation 8 form. Children are visited 6 weekly within the first year of the private fostering arrangements, and 12 weekly thereafter. The target for visits to be completed within timescale in Kent is 90%. The average percentage of visits undertaken within timescale over the 12-month period was 92.2% (88.2% in 2024-2025).

One barrier to visiting children is when notifications (expected 6 weeks prior to a private fostering arrangement starting) are for children who are not yet in the country and therefore, cannot be visited in person. This usually applies to international students or Ukrainian children waiting for a visa (60% of the arrangements). The assessments and statutory checks can be started but the child cannot be seen in person until arrival which is then out of the statutory timescale. The initial visit in person is required within 7 days of being in the arrangement, or within 24 hours if from Ukraine. This year the 'Out of Country PF Communication' option for a case note was introduced for children in another country. This allows for an online call to the child and family to introduce the process and reassure the family what will happen when they arrive. This option was only used 10 times. For some Ukrainian

children who are travelling or in temporary accommodation while awaiting visas, it is difficult to make contact online.

The proportion of private fostering visits where children were seen alone in the year April 2025 to end of March 2026 was 60.6%, representing a decrease from 71.7% in 2024/2025. This level of direct engagement is too low, and social workers will be reminded of the need to see these vulnerable children alone. These children should be seen alone to ensure they are safe and able to speak freely so it is concerning that this is still not happening despite consistent efforts to raise awareness at training events and Good Practice Forums. Improving the quality and consistency of management oversight and reinforcing clearer expectations through the quarterly Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums will be prioritised this year. One challenge of seeing children alone is due to the children themselves. When they are in stable and long-term arrangements, they do not see the need for ongoing intervention and visits so it can become a challenge to see them, including seeing them alone. To improve management oversight of this issue, a checklist was introduced last year within the assessment process to prompt Service Managers to consider whether children had been seen alone prior to sign-off.

Private fostering performance is monitored through Power BI dashboards and the monthly performance scorecard, providing improved visibility of activity and compliance. Performance is routinely reviewed within the Good Practice Forums, where issues are identified, practice challenges are explored, and solutions are considered collectively at the quarterly Forums.

The process of recording a Private Fostering visit differs to that for a child subject to Child in Need and this is not always being recorded accurately. This is regularly discussed with Private Fostering Leads and reminders posted on the Private Fostering Teams channel to ensure recording accurately reflects the practice.

Arrangements subject to dual planning

There were 65 different Private Fostering arrangements open during 2025–2026 some of whom had a dual plan of Child Protection or Child in Need. Table 1 indicates the changes from the previous year in respect of dual planning.

Table 1 – Percentage of Private Fostering subject to other plans

Dual plan with Private Fostering	2024-2025	2025-2026
Child Protection	7.5%	13.8% (9 children)
Child in Need	31%	30.8% (21 children)

There has been a notable percentage rise in in children subject to Child Protection Plans, although the numbers remain low, six of the nine children were subject to a Child Protection Plan because of concerns related to the private fostering arrangement, but in all cases appropriate action has been taken to mitigate the risk for the children. It is positive that proactive and robust action is being taken to identify and address the concerns in a timely way.

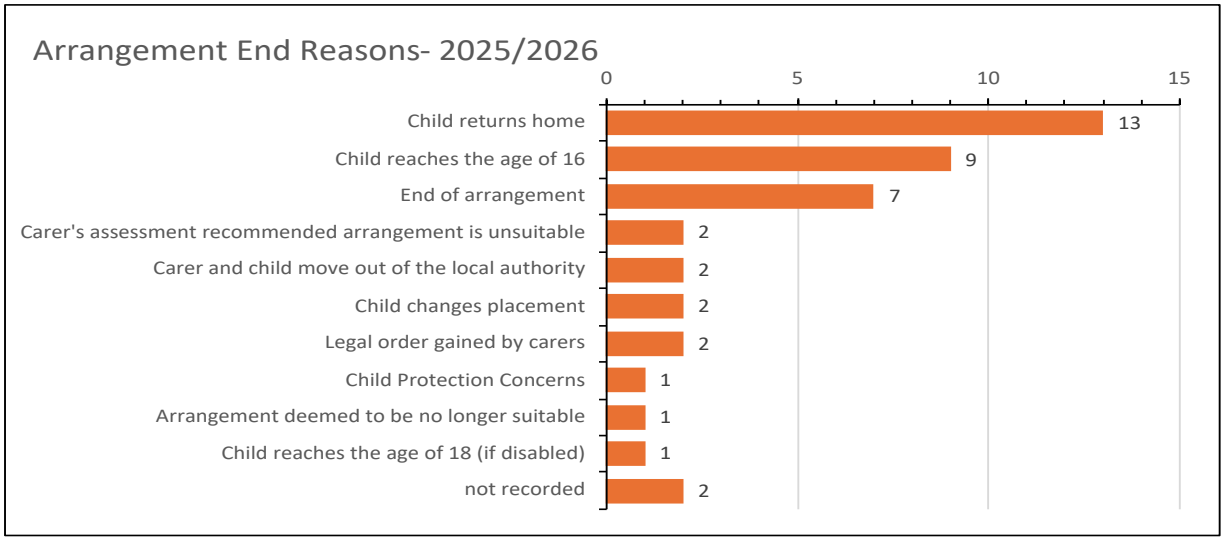
The concerns which lead to dual planning are shown below. As with all child protection planning, there is rigorous oversight by a Social Worker and a Child Protection Chair.

1	Two siblings (one now age 16 and the other 13) chose to live with a family friend following a breakdown in their relationships with their parents. The concerns related to the Private Foster Carer having a long history of alcohol and substance misuse resulting in involvement with the police. An application for Care Orders was initiated. The younger sibling is now subject to an Interim Care Order, placed in a residential children's home. The older sibling is subject to an Interim Supervision Order and has remained living with the Private Foster Carer, a family friend, but with the on-going oversight of the Family Court.
2	A thirteen year old girl who went to stay with her girlfriend's parents, but she is in now looked after under S20 in a children's home. The concerns about the arrangement were related to the quality of care being provided.
3	Two siblings age 1 and 7 were being cared for by their mother's partner in the family home while she served a short prison sentence. She has since been released and is staying with maternal grandmother to the children. Mother has contact on a daily basis with the children. Concerns remain about her and her partner's care and pre-proceedings have commenced in relation to both children.
4	A 15 year old girl moved with the Private Foster Carer to Bedford in September 2025 and a transfer Child Protection Case Conference took place with Bedford assuming case responsibility. The concern about the arrangement was due to the Private Foster Carer involving the child in shoplifting.

Private Fostering Arrangements Ended

During the reporting period 42 arrangements ended. The range of reasons is shown in graph 3. 'Child returns home' data will include international students returning to their country.

Graph 3 – PF arrangements ended by reason



Children aged 16 and over with a disability should remain subject to a private fostering arrangement until they turn 18. While the regulations do not define "disability," current practice applies the Strengthening Independence Service eligibility criteria. This highlights the differing criteria for children with disabilities, balancing the need to support and monitor vulnerability with the principle of proportionate intervention. Updated guidance now allows social work teams discretion to consider each child's individual needs and vulnerabilities when deciding whether to end involvement after age 16. Although Child in Need support can be considered as an alternative, this presents challenges, as it requires consent, whereas Private Fostering is a statutory process with a duty to assess and monitor arrangements. In practice, this cohort is small: last year, only one private fostering arrangement involving a child with a disability ended when the child reached 18.

Children under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme remain subject to private fostering until 18.

The reasons where other arrangements were not deemed suitable are listed below.

Table 2 - Reasons for PF arrangements ended due to no longer being suitable

Child	Age	Reason for end- Arrangement deemed no longer suitable	Current status of child
Child 1	17	Child came to UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme but turned 18 shortly after so plan changed to completion of Child and Family assessment which identified no concerns with the child staying with the family.	No longer in need of service.

Table 3 - Reason for end- Assessment recommended arrangement is unsuitable

Child	Age	Reason for end- Assessment recommended	Current status

		arrangement is unsuitable	of child
Child 2	14	Concerns arose about Private Foster carer being involved in criminality and in possession of substances. Care proceedings initiated as no other family were able to offer care.	Child Looked After s31 (Interim Care Order)
Child 3	14	Private Fostering Arrangement assessed as unsuitable due to carers' cannabis use and carer declining DBS checks.	Child Looked After s.20.

Prohibitions and Disqualifications

There were no recorded prohibitions or disqualifications during 2025/2026.

In circumstances where there are significant concerns about the quality of a Private Fostering arrangement and the care being given, a disqualification or prohibition should be considered and recorded by the team with a clear rationale. This ensures an accurate record of concerns for any future private fostering assessments. These should be recorded and on the Private Foster Carer's file and a formal letter sent. Although there were no recorded prohibitions or disqualifications, there were incidences where risk was identified. In these circumstances, parents are advised to end the arrangement and move their child which most do.

In both the situations above in table 3, a formal prohibition or disqualification may have been appropriate. The social work teams where there were concerns have been reminded of the practice guidance and whilst a prohibition or disqualification cannot be applied retrospectively, a note has been added the to the Private Foster Carer's file.

The Private Fostering Guidance was updated this year to strengthen information about prohibitions and disqualifications, and when these should be applied. This will be discussed and promoted with the Private Fostering Leads for learning and future action.

Private Fostering Awareness Raising and Training

Communication

The Local Authority has a duty to promote and raise awareness of private fostering with partner agencies. In February 2026, a Private Fostering leaflet was circulated to partner agencies who may be likely to encounter children in private fostering arrangements, including English language schools, faith organisations and youth groups.

Additionally, a letter was sent to English Language Schools in February 2026 reminding them of their duties in relation to private fostering. A poster and leaflet were included in the letter to display and disseminate within their schools.

Training

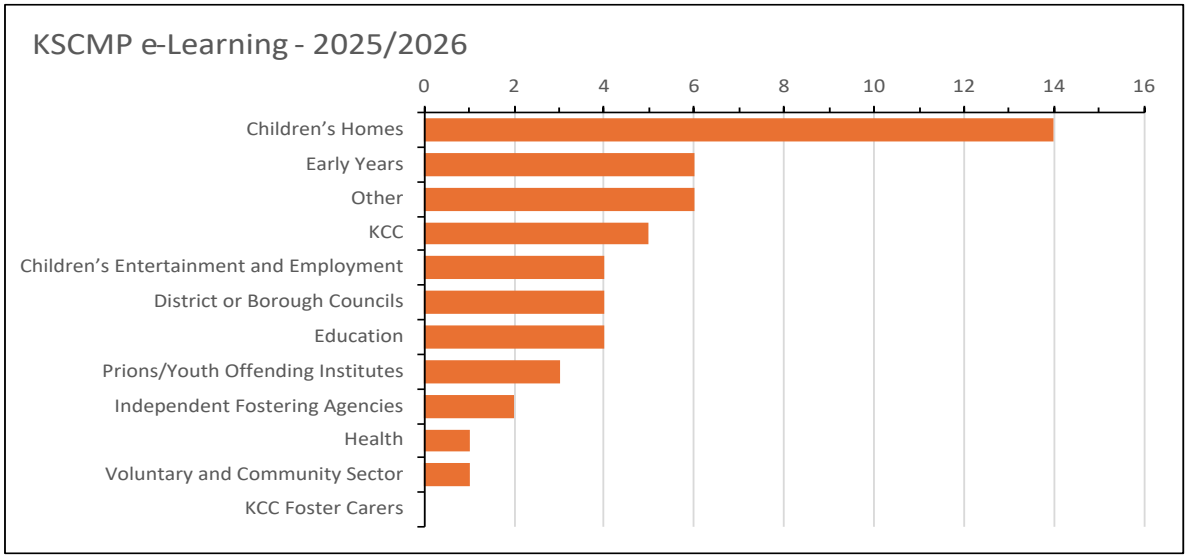
In April 2025, the Practice Development Team provided a virtual training event for multi-agency partners, advertised through the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) attended by 11 participants.

A second date was identified in January 2026 but as the sign up was particularly low, it was postponed allowing for additional promotion. This took place in April 2026 and was attended by 29 participants. The training included information about private fostering requirements; risks and vulnerabilities; duties; and actions for external professionals as well as Children's Social Work Teams. Participants at the event included Safeguarding Leads and teachers from primary and secondary schools, health practitioners, faith organisations and colleagues from Integrated Children's Services.

E-Learning

KSCMP also provide a Private Fostering e-learning course and over the year, this was completed 50 times by partner agencies from Early Years, Education, Health, fostering agencies and Children's Services in Kent and Medway. This was 23 times fewer than the previous year.

Graph 4 – Bar chart showing breakdown of organisation type/sector for KSCMP e-learning

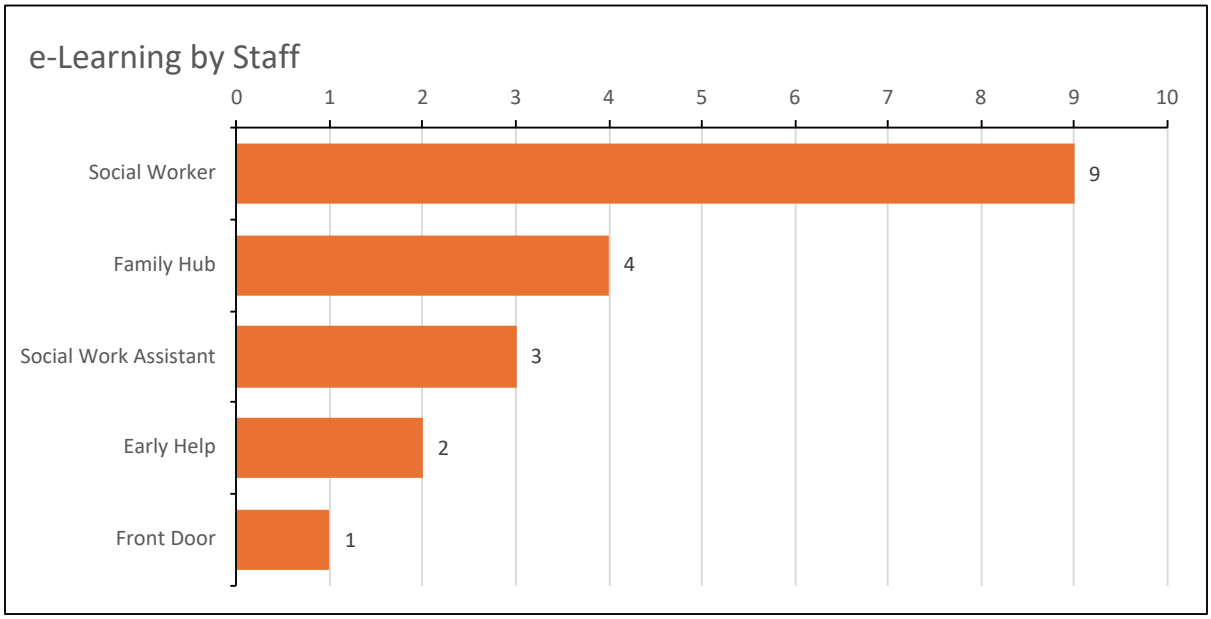


Integrated Children's Services

In January 2026, targeted training was delivered to Newly Qualified Social Workers in Kent and was attended by 40 participants.

DELTA is the training hub for all staff within Integrated Children's Services where dedicated training and resources can be accessed. 16 members of staff accessed the Private Fostering e-learning during 2024-2025 (1 less than the previous year). The breakdown is shown in Graph 6.

Graph 5 - ICS staff professions accessing e-learning 01.04.25 – 31.03.26



Although it is positive that some practitioners are accessing opportunities to increase their knowledge of private fostering, levels of participation remain limited when assessed against the size of the overall workforce, indicating that reach and consistency of learning could be strengthened. However, these figures do not fully capture the contribution of Private Fostering Leads, who play a key role in cascading information, supporting learning and training within their districts. Evidence from audit findings (detailed in the following section) suggests that this targeted activity is effective, demonstrating a positive impact on practice and highlighting the value of the Leads' training and quality assurance functions.

Guidance is regularly reviewed for Kent Procedures Online and this year a new appendix on Prohibitions and Disqualifications was added and clarification provided around the need for children in the Homes for Ukraine scheme to remain identified as Privately Fostered until they are 18.

An updated and refreshed Practice Bulletin on Private Fostering was published in November 2025 to raise awareness and increase knowledge of private fostering and to coincide with the National Private Fostering Awareness Day.

Quality of Practice

Good Practice Leads, Forums and Channels

Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums continued quarterly throughout the year, chaired by a Social Work Standards Officer with private fostering responsibility and overseen by the Private Fostering Lead Officer. All services have a Private Fostering Lead currently, including the Adolescent Service and Early Help. There is an expectation a representative from each Service attends the Forums but there were some regular gaps in attendance highlighted with the Service Managers.

Agenda items include trends and themes (including from audit findings), key performance indicators, challenging aspects of the work and good practice examples. This helps inform changes to the Private Fostering resources, Liberi and the Private Fostering guidance. Information was disseminated back to services by the Leads and audits continued to indicate practice improvement throughout the last year.

There is a Private Fostering Teams Channel for the Leads. Information is shared on a regular basis which provides helpful reminders about practice, information from case law and training.

The county Private Fostering Lead Officer and the Social Work Standards Officer provide individual consultations and guidance to practitioners to help inform practice.

Audits

Private Fostering work is audited as part of the countywide audit process in line with other children receiving support from the Children's Social Work Services. From April 2025 to March 2026 inclusive, 8 privately fostered children's records were audited by the allocated districts. This is lower than the previous year (22 audits) due to the low numbers of privately fostered children. Children who have been privately fostered for some time are likely to have been audited already within the year. Therefore, the number of children who can be audited reduces with the number of private fostering arrangements. Hence, the lower number of audits.

Moderation is a valuable check on the quality of audits undertaken, as well as an opportunity for the Private Fostering Lead to give informal training. This usually includes information about the importance of Reg 8 forms and discussing

permanency and vulnerability. This year has been an increased emphasis on contingency planning within private fostering practice to strengthen forward planning and safeguarding arrangements for children. This was also explored at the Private Fostering Forum, where practitioners identified the need for greater consistency in how contingency planning is addressed within assessments. As a result, a prompt was added to the PFAAR assessment at the start of the year to support practitioners in evidencing this consideration.

Audit analysis

Audit outcomes for private fostering show a notable improvement between 2024/2025 and 2025/2026. In 2024/2025, 77% of audited files were graded as good, with 23% assessed as requires improvement. These findings identified key areas for development, including greater consistency in practice, strengthened recording, and clearer evidence of management oversight.

In response, targeted actions were implemented during 2025/2026, including reinforced learning through forums, the introduction of clearer prompts within assessments, and an increased focus on reflective practice. As a result, all private fostering audits completed in 2025/2026 were graded as good.

While this improvement is positive and suggests that learning from previous audits has been effectively embedded, it is important to recognise that this judgement is based on a small audit sample of eight cases. The limited volume of audits means that continued quality assurance activity is required to provide greater confidence that improvements are fully embedded and sustainable across the wider service.

Table 4 – Grade comparisons from year to year

Percentage grades	2023-2024	2024-25	2025-2026
Good	76%	77%	100%
Requires improvement	24%	23%	0%
Inadequate	0%	0%	0%

Graph 6 – Table showing audit gradings broken down by Area



ILACS Inspection 2025

The most recent full inspection of Kent County Council children's services took place November 2025 (published 2 February 2026) and judged overall effectiveness as Good. In relation to Private Fostering Ofsted said:

> *"Private fostering arrangements are suitable for children. Assessments are timely, and written agreements clearly set out safeguarding responsibilities. Children are seen regularly, and oversight ensures their safety and wellbeing."*

The Ofsted commentary is significant because it focuses on the core legal and practice expectations for private fostering, timely assessment, clarity about safeguarding, regular visiting and seeing the child and effective management oversight. What Ofsted have concluded from the cases they sampled is that Kent's private fostering practice is safe, compliant and child focussed and functioning well as part of Kent's broader help and protection system.

However, it will be important to ensure that Kent do not become complacent and a focus is retained on maintaining the current good standards of practice and remaining sighted on the low number of notifications, as the biggest risk is likely to be on the arrangements that are not known, and requires an increased focus on awareness raising.

Systems

The Management Information and Intelligence Team continues to work closely with district social work teams to improve recording, reduce data errors and ensure

compliance with statutory requirements. The Management Information Officer attends the Good Practice Forums and training events and offers one-to-one support to practitioners. The MIU Officer is a member of the Teams Channel and posted advice and information about Liberi recording.

On 5th March 2026, system changes were agreed at the Liquid Logic Operational Group to enable more sophisticated data collection, including information about prohibitions and requirements. This will ensure we are monitoring accurate recording which will reduce risk if any individual attempts to privately foster a child in future. A new prompt in the private fostering assessment will consider contingency planning. If a private fostering arrangement ends in an unplanned way, there should be a clear plan of who could care for the child if they are unable or unwilling to return to their parents care.

Summary

Over the course of the year, the quality of practice in relation to private fostering has remained consistently strong. Audit activity continues to indicate a good overall standard, and this is aligned with the assurance provided through Ofsted's findings.

Alongside this, the service has maintained a clear and sustained focus on raising awareness of private fostering responsibilities and the importance of timely notification. This has supported an increase in notifications received during the year, suggesting improved recognition and reporting of private fostering arrangements.
Where concerns have been identified, there is clear evidence of prompt and robust action, particularly for children subject to Child Protection plans, demonstrating that risk is being responded to decisively and that safeguarding oversight is being maintained when private fostering arrangements may not be safe or suitable.

For children, this means they are more likely to be identified earlier, appropriately assessed, and supported in safe and suitable arrangements. Where concerns arise, there is clear evidence of prompt and robust action, particularly for those subject to Child Protection plans, ensuring risks are addressed decisively. This strengthens safeguarding oversight and helps to better protect children's welfare, reducing the likelihood of them remaining in unsuitable or unsafe living situations.

Despite these positive indicators, the overall number of notifications remains low and continues to be a key concern. This suggests that private fostering may still be under-identified, and that further efforts are needed to strengthen understanding across partner agencies and within communities.

Awareness raising should therefore remain a priority, with a strengthened focus on both internal staff and external agencies to ensure consistent understanding of private fostering responsibilities and notification requirements. Particular attention should be given to engagement with language schools, where such arrangements may arise, as improved awareness could support earlier identification. As part of future planning, this focus will align with the development of Families First, ensuring that awareness and early identification are embedded within a broader, proactive approach to supporting children and families. It is important that, within the development of new mixed teams and the Family Help model, private fostering continues to be recognised as a statutory responsibility and is not overlooked within broader integrated ways of working.

Operationally, delays within the DBS process continue to impact timely progression of checks. While it is acknowledged that much of this sits outside the direct control of the service, it is important to continue to mitigate delay through escalation, where this is possible, proactive tracking, and consistent interim safeguarding measures while checks are pending.

It was also identified that children are not always routinely seen alone, which is a key safeguarding requirement. This presents a gap in practice, as it may limit children's ability to share their views and experiences openly. Addressing this will be a priority for future improvement to ensure that all children are consistently given the opportunity to be seen alone as part of effective safeguarding oversight.

In addition, recording and monitoring arrangements for prohibitions and disqualifications should be strengthened to ensure that decision-making is fully evidenced, oversight is clear, and any restrictions are consistently captured and reviewed.

Finally, it will be important to consider the implications of Families First on practice with privately fostered children, ensuring social work qualified staff assess and visit these children. Pathways, roles and responsibilities, and wider safeguarding processes should be clear to ensure a sustained focus on the safety and wellbeing of privately fostered children.

Actions completed since 2024-2025 Annual Report		
Action:	**How:**	**Date completed:**
Continue to raise awareness of Private Fostering with partner agencies and wider community	Private Fostering Awareness Raising leaflet to be sent to partner agencies and wider community, including Education, Health, Language Schools and Faith organisations.	Feb 2026
	Promotion of Private Fostering Day	Nov 2026
	Information shared with language and private schools in each area about the legal provisions and their duties and responsibilities to children who are privately fostered.	Feb 2026
	Advertise and provide virtual training for multi-agency partners from statutory and voluntary services. Training will be twice a year, booked via KSCMP.	Continuing through the year. Twice yearly – April and Nov 2025
Develop Private Fostering practice across Integrated Children's Services	Continue to provide access to Private Fostering training and relevant resources on the Kent Academy and Kent Procedures Online.	Throughout the year
	Private Fostering e Learning within induction and training programmes for inexperienced staff, Newly Qualified Social Workers, social work students on Step Up to Social Work programmes, Frontline and Apprenticeships.	January 2026
	Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums to be held with district Private Fostering Leads to discuss best practice and disseminate information. Private Fostering Leads to feed back to districts.	Quarterly throughout the year
	The Private Fostering Teams Channel used as an information exchange and arena for promoting information and guidance to Private Fostering Leads.	As and when required
	Consultations available and advice given by Private Fostering Lead regarding complex Private Fostering Arrangements. These are now recorded on Liberi by the Private Fostering Leads.	Throughout the year.

Ongoing audit and monitoring of practice	2 Private Fostering children to be included in each audit cycle with moderations by moderators with Private Fostering experience.	Throughout the year

Action Plan 2026 – 2027			
	Objectives 2026 – 2027:	**Responsible person:**	**Complete by:**
1	**Continue to raise awareness of Private Fostering (PF) with partner agencies and wider community**		
1.1	Advertise and provide virtual training for multi-agency partners from statutory and voluntary services. Training will be twice a year, booked via KSCMP with one coinciding with Coram BAAF Private Fostering Day.	PF Lead / KSCMP	Bi-annual April 2026 November 2026
1.2	Share Private Fostering Day events, including Coram BAAF activities	PF Lead	4th November 2026
1.3	Build links with language and private schools in each area to improve communication and practice. Private Fostering leaflet and poster to be sent to partner agencies and wider community, including Education, Health, Language Schools and Faith organisations	PF Lead	February 2027
2	**Develop Private Fostering practice across Integrated Children's Services**		
2.1	Highlight in CYPE Bulletin practice expectations and statutory requirements for Private Fostering and link to updated guidance.	PF Lead	Throughout 2026-2027
2.2	Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums to be held with district Private Fostering Leads to discuss best practice, learning from audits and data and disseminate information. Private Fostering Leads to feed back to districts.	PF Lead and District Leads	Quarterly
2.4	Continue to promote attendance at the Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums with Service Managers and link with data/audit findings.	PF Lead	As and when required

	Key discussion points from the Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums summarised and shared within the Good Practice Private Fostering Forums Teams channel.		
2.5	Consultations available and advice given by Private Fostering Lead Officer and Social Work Standards Officer regarding complex Private Fostering Arrangements	PF Lead	As and when required
2.6	Promote Private Fostering within the Families First new service delivery programme. Private Fostering Guidance to be reviewed in line with the practice changes in the Family's First model.	PF Lead	February 2027
2.7	Continue to promote Private Fostering training and relevant resources on the Kent Academy and all Teams channels.	PF Lead	2026-2027
2.8	Private Fostering promotion within induction and training programmes for inexperienced staff, Newly Qualified Social Workers, social work students on Step Up to Social Work programmes, Approach Social Work (formerly Frontline) and Apprenticeships were required.	Team Managers/ district Leads / ASYE and student programme co-ordinators	Throughout2026-2027
2.9	Liaison with specific services, where required regarding identifying PF – Adolescent Service, Strengthening Independence. This may include visits to service meetings.	PF Lead	Throughout 2026-2027
2.10	Strengthen management oversight and practitioner awareness through direct emails and within Good Practice Forums to ensure all privately fostered children are routinely seen alone, in line with statutory requirements, with compliance monitored through supervision, case auditing, and performance reporting.	Team Managers, Service Managers,	Throughout 2026-2027

		District Leads and PF Lead	
2.11	Improve recording of Regulation 8 visits, especially within services where this is challenging, e.g., Adolescent Service, as well as increasing the number of children seen alone. This will be through the visits to service meetings, within awareness raising/moderations/Good Practice in Private Fostering Forums, and COP in Private Fostering Week.	PF Lead and Practice Development Team	Throughout 2025-2026
2.12	Ensure management oversight is consistently recorded within all private fostering annual reviews, with compliance monitored through regular audits. This will be supported with changes to the Private Fostering Annual Review form on Liberi to include a prompt to re-assign the form to the Service Manager for review and sign off.	Team Managers, Service Managers, District Leads and PF Lead	Throughout 2026-2027
3	**Ongoing practice monitoring**		
3.1	4 Private Fostering children to be included in each audit cycle, with moderations by moderators with Private Fostering experience.	Management Information Team	2026-2027
3.2	Work with Management Information and Intelligence to: - Understand data on nationality and country and correlate this to initial visits to report separately regarding Kent children and international students or Ukrainian nationals. Capture and monitor child seen alone data.	PF Lead / Management Information	February 2027
3.3	Further analysis required to understand and report on initial visits to children within Private Fostering arrangements. Changes to Liberi already made will support this but further work is required to improve reporting.	PF Lead / Management Information	February 2027