**Appendix 1 -Social Worker’s Checklist**

**Initial Contact**

List of matters to be addressed by the social worker during initial contacts with private foster carers, parents, children and concerned others.

* Check whether the arrangement falls within the scope of the Private Fostering Regulations – see definition
* Check whether formal notice has been provided and whether the written notification addresses all of the relevant issues outlined in the department’s notification form. If necessary, provide a standard notification form for the private foster carer or parent to use – see appendix 4 notification template
* Provide all relevant individuals with copies of departmental leaflets and guidance notes relating to private fostering.
* Obtain copies of any outstanding consent forms and declarations in respect of the private foster carers and any other members of their household over the age of 16
* Meet with the parent(s), others with parental responsibility, the private foster carer(s), and or other persons concerned, to:
* Explain the Council’s Policy and Procedure and Private Fostering Regulations and Standards (Provide all parties with copies of relevant department leaflets)
* Outline the services the department provides to assess, support and advise parents and carers and outline the local authority powers and duties to prohibit, disqualify or impose requirements or otherwise exercise any of their functions under the Children Act 1989 in respect of the child.
* Discuss whether any support or referral to another agency would diminish the need for the child to be privately fostered
* Discuss and agree, arrangements to meet the child (if possible, in advance of the placement) to gain his/her wishes and feeling about the proposed arrangement (where this is appropriate taking into account the child’s age and understanding) and to otherwise complete an single assessment of their needs
* Undertake a single assessment of the child’s needs and consider whether the child’s needs could be met by the provision of services rather than their placement with private foster carers
* Verify the proposed start date and the intended duration of the private fostering arrangement has been understood and agreed between the parent of the child (or other person with parental responsibility for him/her).
* Ensure that arrangements for contact between the child and his parent(s) (or other person(s) with parental responsibility for him) or any other persons who are significant to him/her (e.g. siblings, other family members, close friends) have been agreed and understood, and that those arrangements will be satisfactory for the child and consistent with his/her needs and welfare.
* Ensure that the parent(s) (or other persons with parental responsibility for the child) have agreed with the proposed private foster carer satisfactory financial arrangements for the ongoing care of the child. Ensure that appropriate arrangements have been agreed for the child to have access to medical, dental care and treatment whilst they are privately fostered. Collate details of dentist, GP practice and any ongoing health treatment. Check arrangements to ensure that the child has access to appropriate education Clarify the arrangements that have been made to ensure that the child’s religious, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background needs will be met.

Clarify how parental responsibility for the child will be exercised in this arrangement, including what level of responsibility will be delegated to the private foster carer in terms of providing the day to day care of the child Advise the parents and private fostering carer(s) of the value of a drafting a written agreement in relation to delegation of responsibility and consent.

* Arrange for all adults members and those young people age 16 and above living in the household to have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring check (DBS). The private foster carer and each member of his/her household aged 16 and above should be asked to provide written consent for such a check to be carried out. The Social worker will need to advise the person concerned that spent convictions will be disclosed.
* A record of convictions will not necessarily preclude the person from fostering a child privately, but will require careful consideration in consultation with the team manger and Private Fostering lead for Bury Council.
* The disqualification provisions contained in section 68 of The Children Act 1989 and the Disqualification from Caring for Children (England) Regulations 2004 are relevant in this respect.
* Check the local authority’s records to determine whether the proposed or actual private foster carer or any member of his/her household is known to social care (and liaise with other local authorities if the proposed private foster carer has only been in the living in the local authority area for a short-time.
* Make the proposed private foster carer and the parents aware of the need to notify Bury Council of any changes in their circumstances e.g. convictions, changes in composition of household, moving house, serious illness, death etc

If the child is not yet placed then an agreement in principle should be made with all parties about when the child will be placed, taking into account of the need for assessment processes to be completed in advance of the placement.

Ensure that the parent(s), private foster carers and others, understand the need to notify the local authority within a minimum of 48 hours of the child’s placement.