



## Guidance Notes for the completion of the PF1 return

Private Fostering Arrangements in England

### Version History

1.0	Initial version of the 2012-13 PF1 Guidance notes.	March 2012
1.1	Clarification around notifications to be recorded under Items 2 and 3 are highlighted in yellow.	September 2012

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### 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013

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### Purpose of return

The PF1 statistical return was introduced from 1 April 2004 and is designed to collect information on the number of children in private fostering arrangements in England. This is the ninth year of collection. PF1 data is submitted electronically by local authorities (LAs), using the Department's secure IT system - COLLECT.

### Deadline

A PF1 return is required from all Local Authorities in England, even those who have no children under private fostering arrangements. All completed PF1 returns should be returned to the Department by **31 May 2013**.

There have been no changes since the 2011-12 collection.

### General Background Notes

A privately fostered child is defined as one under the age of 16 (18 if disabled) that is cared for by someone other than a parent or close relative as defined in section 105 of the Children Act 1989. Private foster carers may be from an extended family, such as a cousin or great uncle. They may be a friend of the family, or other non-relative, or someone unknown who has advertised to offer to privately foster a child. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for him or her has done so for fewer than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer than that. Privately fostered children are a diverse and potentially vulnerable group. Groups of privately fostered children include children sent from abroad to stay with another family.

For some years, the notification scheme under the Children Act 1989 was criticised for its failure to protect vulnerable children living in private fostering arrangements. Section 67 of the Children Act 1989 has therefore been amended by Section 44 of the Children Act 2004, and, in particular, extends the duty of Local Authorities in cases where a child is proposed to be, but is not yet, privately fostered. The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005, which, in essence, set out a private fostering notification scheme, replaced the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 1991. The 2005 Regulations and Section 44 of the Children Act 2004 came into effect on 1 July 2005.

Privately fostered children are not “looked after” children in the terms of section 22 of the Children Act 1989. However, Local Authorities have a responsibility to ensure that the welfare of privately fostered children is promoted, as identified in Part IX of the Children Act 1989, amended by section 44 of the Children Act 2004, ([http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1989/Ukpga\\_19890041\\_en\\_1.htm#end](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1989/Ukpga_19890041_en_1.htm#end))

and in the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 (<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051533.htm>)

Further details on legislation are shown in Appendix A.

#### **Notes on individual numbered items on PF1 form**

#### **Section one – Numbers of children**

##### **Item 1: LA Code.**

1. Use the standard 3-digit Education Code number.

##### **Item 2: Number of notifications of new private fostering arrangements received during the year in accordance with Regulation 3(1) and Regulation 5(1) Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005.**

2. This is the number of notifications of new private fostering arrangements received by your Local Authority between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013. This includes notifications that were received during the year, but which may relate to arrangements that began/were scheduled to begin outside the year (for example, a notification could be received in February 2013 for a new arrangement planned to begin in May 2013). Likewise, authorities should include those arrangements where they were notified after the arrangement had already started (Regulation 5(1)).

##### **Item 3: Number of cases where action was taken in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 4(1) and Regulation 7(1) of the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 for carrying out visits. Although Regulations 4 and 7 state that this must be within 7 days, what we are interested in for this item is just those where initial action was taken, regardless of the timescale.**

3. This item is the number of children counted under item 2 where action was taken in accordance with these requirements by an official of your authority between 1 April 2012 and up to 7 working days after 31 March 2013 (see the following link for further explanation of the requirements: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051533.htm>)

**Item 4: Of these, the number of cases where this action was taken within 7 working days of receipt of notification of the private fostering arrangement.**

4. Of those children counted under item 3, enter the number who received a visit from an official of the authority between 1 April 2012 and up to 7 working days after 31 March 2013 (i.e. up to 9 April 2013). The deadline for visits is extended for 7 working days after 31 March 2013 as authorities are allowed up to 7 days to visit a child after the beginning of a private fostering agreement. For those arrangements where authorities were notified after the arrangement began, authorities should enter the number of visits completed within 7 working days of the notification of the fostering arrangement.

**Item 5: Number of new arrangements that began during the year.**

5. This is the number of private fostering arrangements that actually started between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013. This includes those arrangements where notification was received outside the assessment period (for example, where notification was received in March 2012, but the arrangement actually began in April 2012).

**Item 6: The number of private fostering arrangements that began on or after 1 April 2012 where visits were made at intervals of not more than six weeks.**

6. This item is collecting information on the follow-up visits which have been made by local authorities. (The minimum number of visits required is at intervals of not more than six weeks in respect of the first year of any private fostering arrangement and at intervals of not more than 12 weeks in respect of the second and any subsequent years of any arrangement).

We are aware that there may be instances where an arrangement begins within the survey year, however the first scheduled visit will be outside the survey year, for *example*, if a private fostering arrangement begins on 1 March 2013, then the first scheduled visit will be 6 weeks after this in mid-April 2013. These instances would not be included in Item 6. However, we expect these numbers to be small and if the visits are undertaken on time will be recorded in item 8 of the following year's return.

**Item 7: The number of private fostering arrangements that began before 1 April 2012 that were continuing on 1 April 2012.**

7. This item is collecting information on the number of private fostering arrangements which require scheduled visits within the survey year.

**Item 8: The number of private fostering arrangements that began before 1 April 2012 that were continuing on 1 April 2012 where scheduled visits in the survey year were completed in the required timescale.**

8. This item is collecting information on the follow-up visits which have been made by local authorities within the required timescale. (The minimum number of visits required is at intervals of not more than six weeks in respect of the first year of any private fostering arrangement and at intervals of not more than 12 weeks in respect of the second and any subsequent years of any arrangement).

**Item 9: Number of private fostering arrangements that ended during the year.**

9. As with item 5, this item covers the actual number of arrangements that ended between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013. Therefore, notification of the end of the agreement may have been received outside the assessment period.

**Item 10: Number of children under private fostering arrangements.**

10. Items 1 to 9, as shown above, are calculated for the whole year 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. Item 10 is concerned only with the number of private fostering arrangements that your authority was aware of as at 31 March 2013. For item 10, please enter the number of private fostering arrangements that you were aware were still active as at 31 March 2013.

## **Section Two – Breakdown by Age and Place of Birth**

11. For all children measured under item 5, please enter a breakdown of their age and place of birth. Age should be measured as at 31 March 2013. This includes private fostering arrangements that may have ended before 31 March. For the purposes of completing this return, authorities should use the list shown in Appendix B to classify countries into geographical regions.

## Appendix A

### Legislation

The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005, which came into effect on 1 July 2005, provide for the arrangements for fostering children privately. These Regulations make provision for the matters as to which Local Authorities are required to satisfy themselves regarding the welfare of privately fostered children. In terms of the information Local Authorities are required to provide on the PF1 return, these are covered by the regulations as follows:

1. Regulation 3 (1) requires any person who proposes to foster a child privately to notify the appropriate Local Authority at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is to begin or immediately, where the arrangement is to begin within six weeks.
2. Regulation 3 (2) requires any person who is involved (whether or not directly) in arranging for a child to be fostered privately must notify the appropriate Local Authority of the arrangement as soon as possible after the arrangement has been made.
3. Regulation 5 (1) requires any person who has been fostering a child privately and has not given notification to the appropriate Local Authority must notify the appropriate Local Authority immediately.
4. Regulation 6 (1) requires any person who has given notification under Regulation 3 (1) must notify the appropriate Local Authority within 48 hours of the arrangement starting.
5. Regulation 10 (1) requires any person who has been fostering a child privately, but has ceased to do so, to notify the appropriate Local Authority within 48 hours of the arrangement ceasing.
6. Regulation 4 (1) states that where a Local Authority have received notification under regulation 3 they must, within seven working days, visit the proposed private foster carer at the premises where the child will be accommodated and visit and speak to the child.
7. Regulation 7 (1) states that where a local authority have received a notification under regulation 5 or 6 they must, within seven working days, visit the private foster carer at the premises where the child will be accommodated and visit and speak to the child.
8. Regulation 8 (1) states that following the initial visit to the child, a Local Authority must arrange for the child to be visited at intervals of not more than six weeks in the first year of the arrangement and thereafter at intervals of not more than twelve weeks.
9. Regulation 8 (6) provides that for the purposes of Regulation 8 the start of the private fostering arrangement is deemed to be the time when the Local Authority become aware of it.

## **Appendix A**

10. Schedule 1, with reference to Regulations 3 and 5, requires that any person notifying a Local Authority of a private fostering arrangement should specify the child's name, sex, date and place of birth, racial, cultural and linguistic background.

## Appendix B

### Classification of countries into Geographic Regions

(Derived from [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) [country profiles])

For the purposes of this return, authorities should use the following list to classify the place of birth of a child under a private fostering arrangement into a geographic region.

GEOGRAPHIC REGION	COUNTRY		
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>	England	Scotland	
	Northern Ireland	Wales	
<b>EUROPE</b>	Albania	Germany	Netherlands
	Armenia	Gibraltar (UK Overseas Territory)	Norway
	Austria	Greece	Poland
	Azerbaijan	Holy See	Portugal
	Belarus	Hungary	Romania
	Belgium	Iceland	Russian Federation
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ireland	Serbia and Montenegro
	Bulgaria	Italy	Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo)
	Croatia	Latvia	Slovakia
	Cyprus	Liechtenstein	Slovenia
	Czech Republic	Lithuania	Spain, Kingdom of
	Denmark	Luxembourg	Sweden
	Estonia	Macedonia	Switzerland
	Finland	Malta	Turkey
	France	Moldova	Ukraine
	Georgia		
<b>CANADA &amp; USA</b>	Canada	United States of America	
<b>CARIBBEAN, CENTRAL &amp; SOUTH AMERICA</b>	Anguilla (UK Overseas Territory)	Cuba	Paraguay
	Antigua and Barbuda	Dominica, Commonwealth of	Peru
	Argentina	Dominican Republic	Saint Christopher and Nevis
	Ascension (UK Overseas Territory)	Ecuador	Saint Christopher and Nevis (St Kitts & Nevis)
	Bahamas	El Salvador	Saint Helena (UK Overseas Territory)
	Barbados	Falkland Islands (UK Overseas Territory)	Saint Lucia
	Belize	Grenada	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines



## Appendix B

	Bermuda (UK Overseas Territory)	Guatemala	South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands (UK OT)
	Bolivia	Guyana	Suriname
	Brazil	Haiti	Trinidad and Tobago
	British Antarctic Territory (UK O'seas Territory)	Honduras	Tristan da Cunha (Dependency of St Helena)
	British Virgin Islands (UK Overseas Territory)	Jamaica	Turks and Caicos Islands (UK Overseas Territory)
	Cayman Islands (UK Overseas Territory)	Mexico	
	Chile	Montserrat (UK Overseas Territory)	Uruguay
	Colombia	Nicaragua	Venezuela
	Costa Rica	Panama	
<b>AFRICA</b>	Algeria	Gabon	Niger
	Angola	Gambia, The Republic of	Nigeria
	Benin	Ghana	Rwanda
	Botswana	Guinea	Sao Tome and Principe
	Burkina Faso	Guinea-Bissau	Senegal
	Burundi	Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire)	Seychelles
	Cameroon	Kenya	Sierra Leone
	Cape Verde	Lesotho	Somalia
	Central African Republic	Liberia	South Africa
	Chad	Libya	Sudan
	Comoros	Madagascar	Swaziland
	Congo	Malawi	Tanzania
	Congo (Democratic Republic)	Mali	Togo
	Djibouti	Mauritania	Tunisia
	Egypt	Mauritius	Uganda
	Equatorial Guinea	Morocco	Zambia
	Eritrea	Mozambique	Zimbabwe
	Ethiopia	Namibia	
<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>	Bahrain	Kuwait	Saudi Arabia
	Iran	Lebanon	Syria
	Iraq	Oman	United Arab Emirates
	Israel	Palestine National Authority	Yemen
	Jordan	Qatar (State of)	
<b>ASIA</b>	Afghanistan	Indonesia	Nepal
	Bangladesh	Japan	Pakistan
	Bhutan	Kazakhstan	Philippines

## Appendix B

	British Indian Ocean Territory (UK O'seas Territ.)	Korea, DPR (North Korea)	Singapore
	Brunei	Korea, Republic of (South Korea)	Sri Lanka
	Burma	Kyrgyzstan	Taiwan
	Cambodia	Laos	Tajikistan
	China	Macao (Special Administrative Region of China)	Thailand
	East Timor	Malaysia	Turkmenistan
	Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China)	Maldives	Uzbekistan
	India	Mongolia	Vietnam
<b>OCEANIA</b>	Australia	Nauru	Solomon Islands
	Fiji	New Zealand	Tonga
	Kiribati	Papua New Guinea	Tuvalu
	Marshall Islands	Pitcairn Henderson Ducie & Oeno Islands (UK OT)	Vanuatu
	Micronesia	Samoa	