

PRIVATE FOSTERING ONE MINUTE GUIDE



WHAT IS IT?

Private fostering is where a private arrangement has been made by the child's parent (or someone with parental responsibility) to live with a carer who is not a close relative of a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if the child is disabled).

Close relative is defined as: grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or step- parent (by marriage) of the child.

The arrangement is expected to last for more than 28 days and on a full time basis.

Examples of private fostering include:

- Children/young people whose parents work or study long and/or anti-social hours
- Children/young people sent to the UK for education or health care by birth parents from overseas
- Children/young people living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or difficulties at home
- Teenagers living with their partner's family

Privately fostered children are not looked after children.

PARENTS AND PRIVATE FOSTER CARERS SHOULD NOTIFY BFSWS

The Parent/s (or those with Parental Responsibility) and the private foster carer have a duty to notify BFSWS of the name and address of the private foster carer, six weeks before the start of the private fostering arrangement.

If the arrangement is already in place, they must notify BFSWS at once.

If the arrangement is made in an emergency and is intended to last more than 28 days, this information should be provided within 48 hours of the child being placed.

PARTNER AGENCIES SHOULD NOTIFY BFSWS

When completing forms with and meeting children, young people and their families, we should all ask questions about who lives in the household and who has parental responsibility – this can help in identifying a private fostering arrangement.

Childcare professionals from other agencies (such as teachers or health care practitioners) should notify BFSWS if they become aware of or believe that a child is living in a private fostering arrangement.

The Children Act 1989 & 2004 places a legal duty on local authorities to protect and promote the welfare of privately fostered children, to check that the arrangements for the child/ren are safe and that the child/ren are well cared for. Section 44 of the Children Act 2004 extended these duties to include children who are proposed to be, but not yet, privately fostered. The duties are set out in the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005.

Where the local authority is informed of a proposed or existing private fostering arrangement:

- BFSWS will undertake a home visit within 10 working days of the date of notification
- A BFSWS Social Worker will carry out an assessment of the suitability of the arrangements for the child
- The child's Social Worker will visit the child every six weeks during the first year of the private fostering arrangement and then every 12 weeks thereafter. The child should be seen at the placement and spoken to alone where this is appropriate.
- Each privately fostered child is allocated a Social Worker.

WHO ARE THE KEY CONTACTS?

BFSWS Central Referral Team for notifications from parents, private foster carers or other members of the public:



0044 (0) 0808 168 3111



crt.bfsws@coreassets.com

FURTHER REFERENCES INCLUDE

Defence Instruction and Notices - 2018DIN01-130

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Children and Social Work Act 2017