

Please consider the checklist below to determine if you should contact your local children's social care service, if you are unsure please call for further advice.

Private Fostering Checklist

- | Y | N | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | Is the young person under 16 (or 18 if a child with disabilities)? |
| ☐ | ☐ | Are they being provided with accommodation by someone other than a parent, carers with parental responsibility or a close relative? |
| ☐ | ☐ | Has the young person been accommodated for a period of 28 days or more? If not, is the intent to accommodate for a period of 28 days or more? |
| ☐ | ☐ | Are the young persons parents/carers with parental responsibility living in separate accommodation from the young person? |

In addition to completing the checklist, you also have a duty to:

- Contribute to the assessment of the suitability of the arrangement by providing relevant information about the child or carer when requested.
- Monitor the child's welfare and progress and provide support and guidance to the child's carer in accordance with your agency's remit.
- Be involved in ongoing liaison with children's social care services to address any welfare concerns or unmet needs.

Private Fostering



Information for professionals

Are you working with a child who is living with another family under a private arrangement?

If the answer to this question is 'yes' you have a statutory responsibility to report this to your local children's social care service so that they can check if it falls under Private Fostering legislation. Please read on for advice.

Get in touch

For more information you can contact us on 01226 772423.

What is private fostering?

Private fostering is an arrangement made without the direct involvement of a Local Authority. Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if they have a disability) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative and where this has lasted, or is expected to last, for 28 days or more.

For this purpose, a 'close relative' is defined as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt or step-parent by marriage or civil partnership.

Privately fostered children are a diverse and vulnerable group that could include:

- Teenagers who, having broken ties with their parents, are staying in short-term arrangements with friends or others
- Children being brought into the UK for the purposes of adoption, where their home country's adoption order is not recognised by the UK government.
- Children sent from abroad to stay with another family
- Children from abroad who are attending school in England and who are living with host families
- Children living at independent boarding schools who do not return home for holidays.

What are your professional responsibilities and duties?

Professionals have a statutory duty in relation to private fostering. If you have become aware of a possible private fostering arrangement, you have a duty to inform the local authority.

Failure to notify children's social care services could place a child at risk.

Here is a list of examples of possible scenarios which may alert you to a child that is being privately fostered:

At school, in an early years' setting, or youth club:

- A child suddenly disappears without warning.
- A child says they are staying with a friend or relative, or even a stranger. It is important in these circumstances, to establish the exact nature of these relationships.

At the doctor's surgery or a health clinic:

- A patient attends with a child who has not been seen before in clinic
- A known child attends the surgery with adults who are not known to the surgery

What are the responsibilities of children's social care?

Although it is a private arrangement there are certain duties and responsibilities under the Children Act 1989 and 2004, to make sure that children who are privately fostered are protected.

The law requires that children's social care services assess the suitability of the arrangement, carry out regular visits to make sure that children are safe and well cared for, and that advice is available to those caring for them.

Children's social care services has the power to stop a person from private fostering in their area, if the carer or accommodation is assessed as not being suitable.

They can also make requirements that the carer takes action to fix any issues identified for example, fitting suitable car seats