



Kinship Care Support Service

Private Fostering

What is private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is NOT:

-the child's parent or person with parental responsibility

a local authority foster carer or

-one of the following relatives: step-parent, grandparent,

brother, sister uncle or aunt

AND

the arrangement made between a parent/person with parental responsibility and the carer, and lasts, or is intended to last, for 28 days or more.

Informing your local authority of a private fostering arrangement

When a child is privately fostered, or is about to be, the parent, carer, and anyone else involved in making the private fostering arrangement, must notify the local authority of the arrangement.

What will the local authority do once they have been notified?

Once notified a local authority social worker will arrange to visit the child, the carer and the parent and offer support and guidance to all those involved to make sure that the arrangement can work successfully. They will keep in touch at regular intervals (usually every 6 weeks in the first year). Parents, carers and the child can ask for assistance and support to deal with any difficulties.

The information's accuracy is subject to change depending on the law. It should be used as information only and not as legal advice. However, we will make every effort to ensure its accuracy at the time of publishing.

The local authority is also under a specific duty to ensure that:

- i) the welfare of the children who are privately fostered in their area is safeguarded and promoted. The local authority has a duty to oversee the arrangements and ensure that the carer has a good understanding of the child's needs.

ii) the private foster carers are 'suitable' and

iii) the private foster carers receive any information that they may need to help them care for the child. Taking on the care of someone else's child is not often straightforward. Misunderstandings and conflicts can easily arise, even between friends, and living away from their parents for any length of time can present challenges to children and their carers. The local authority can support them both if the child is assessed as being 'in need'.

This support should ensure that the child is:

- Safe and well looked-after
- Healthy
- Receiving a proper education
- Being encouraged to reach their full potential
- Keeping in touch with people who are important to them
- Living with someone who helps them value their culture and sense of identity
- Properly supported when they become independent

For more information

Family Rights Group provides free telephone and email advice to family members who are involved with the local authority about the care and protection of their children.

- Contact FRG's advice line for further advice, on 0808 801 0366. It is open Monday-Friday 10am-3.30pm.
- You can also email to advice@frg.org.uk.
- You can also visit www.frg.org.uk/advice_sheets.html where you can download our detailed advice sheets.

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