



Private Fostering - A Guide for Professionals





What is Private Fostering?

Private fostering is an arrangement made between a child's parent and the private foster carer.

The Children Act 1989 states that if a child is under the age of 16 (18 if they have a disability) goes to live with someone who is not a close relative for 28 days or more this is a private fostering arrangement.

The arrangement is a private one, usually made between a parent and the carer, (although it could be made by a young person and the carer). The private foster carer might be from the extended family such as a cousin or great aunt, a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone not previously known to the child's family.

It is not private fostering if the child is living with a close relative such as a grandparent, aunt or uncle or sibling (whether blood related or through marriage), or if the carer has Parental Responsibility, a Residence Order or a Special Guardianship Order.

Examples of Private Fostering:

- Teenager living with a friend's family because of difficulties with his or her own family
- Children living with a parent's unmarried partner when the parent leaves the home (for example is imprisoned)
- Children who are sent to this country for education or health care while their parents remain abroad
- Children at boarding schools who stay with a guardian during the summer holiday

The Regulations relating to private fostering were strengthened by the Children Act 2004 following the death of Victoria Climbié. **The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005** clearly states that education, health and other professionals have a duty to notify the local authority of a private fostering arrangement that comes to their attention if they are not satisfied that the parent or carer has notified the local authority.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010, states in chapter 11.24 "All professionals working with children have an important role in relation to safeguarding privately fostered children".

If you believe that a child is being privately fostered you should notify Children's Services:

By phone: 0845 607 2000

By email: childrenservices@worcestershire.gov.uk



