



**BARNSLEY**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

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Healthy / Learning / Growing /  
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# Private Fostering

# What is private fostering?

- ▶ Private fostering is an arrangement made without direct involvement from a Local Authority for a child to be cared for by someone who is not their parent, guardian or a close relative.
- ▶ A close relative is defined as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or step-parent by marriage or civil partnership. If a child is cared for by these relatives this is not private fostering.
- ▶ Private fostering applies to children and young people under the age of 16 or up until the age of 18 if they have a disability and the arrangement has lasted or is expected to last for 28 days or more.



# Why do children's social care need to be involved?



- ▶ A child under a private fostering arrangement is not in care, but Barnsley Children's Social Care team is legally responsible for the welfare of all privately fostered young people.
- ▶ In part 9 of the Children Act 1989 and 2004, certain responsibilities and duties are set out for local authorities to follow. This includes assessing the suitability of the arrangement, completing regular home visits and providing advice to carers and parents.
- ▶ The local authority is able to stop a person from privately fostering children if the care or accommodation is assessed as unsuitable and request carers take action to fix any issues e.g. fitting suitable car seats.

# What might indicate a private fostering arrangement?

- ▶ A child shares that they are living with a friend or relative away from their parents.
- ▶ A child attends the doctors with adults who are not known by the surgery.
- ▶ A child from abroad who is attending a school in England and living with a host family.



# Parent and carer's responsibilities.

## **Parent's responsibilities:**

- ▶ Create an agreement with the private foster carer about the arrangement including managing the young person's health, educational and financial needs.
- ▶ Outline arrangements for contact between the young person and their parent and the parent and the private foster carer.

## **Carer's responsibilities:**

- ▶ The private foster carer will be responsible for the child or young person's health, education, social, physical and emotional needs as agreed with their parent.
- ▶ Ensure the privately fostered child's needs are being met.

# Responsibilities of professionals



- ▶ Professionals have a statutory duty to inform the local authority if they are made aware of or suspect a private fostering arrangement.
- ▶ Failure to notify children's social care services could place a child at risk.
- ▶ Contribute to the assessment of the suitability of the arrangement by providing relevant information about the child or carer. Monitor the child's welfare and provide support and guidance to the carer.

# Role of a private fostering social worker

- ▶ The law requires children's social care to assess the suitability of private fostering arrangements. These assessments will look at the child's needs and the carer's ability to meet these needs. This will be completed within 42 working days.
- ▶ A decision can be made to prohibit the private foster carer from providing this arrangement on the basis they are not suitable, or the home is unsuitable.
- ▶ The private fostering social worker will visit the child at a minimum of 6 weeks in the first year.
- ▶ Further checks to be completed with regard to the private foster carer such as DBS, references and home safety check.
- ▶ Private foster carers are subject to annual reviews.





## How to refer a Private Fostering arrangement to Barnsley Children's Social Care.

- ▶ Contact the integrated front door on 01226 772423 to make a referral. This information will then be screened before being transferred to the private fostering social worker.
- ▶ Once children's social care have been notified about the private fostering arrangement they will meet with the carer and child or young person and complete a private fostering assessment.
- ▶ Any questions?

