

7 Minute Briefing: Private Fostering



7

What to do

- If you know or suspect a child or young person is being Privately Fostered, you should notify the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. You should inform the parent and/or carer about Private Fostering and inform that a referral is being made.

Phone: **0300 555 2866** (option 2)



For more information please scan the QR code.

1

What is Private Fostering?

- Private Fostering is a term used when someone who is not a parent, carer with parental responsibility or a 'close relative' (a close relative includes grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling or 1st cousin) is looking after a child or young person under 16 (18 if the young person has a disability) for 28 days or more in their own home.
- Private Fostering also covers children or young people who stay at a residential school for more than two weeks during the school holidays.

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Notification

- Parents and carers have a legal requirement to notify the Local Authority of a proposed Private Fostering Arrangement 6 weeks prior to the arrangement being in place, or, if in an emergency, as soon as possible.
- Parents are responsible for providing the carer with all the information needed to care for the child/young person.

2

Background

- Since the Children Act 2004, it has been a legal responsibility for a Local Authority to know about children and young people who are Privately Fostered. Children's Services have a duty to assess and monitor arrangements to make sure the child or young person is safe, and their needs are being met.

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Examples of children who may become privately fostered

- A child or young person sent (for educational or medical purposes) from another country to live with someone who is not their parent, carer with parental responsibility or close relative whilst their parents remain abroad.
 - A child or young person living with a family friend as a result of their parents breaking up, family fall out or a parent in hospital or in custody.
- holistic perspective of what is happening.

4

Legal requirement

- Private Fostering is only legitimate if the parent has made the arrangement with the carer and the Local Authority is notified and in agreement. By law, parents/carers must notify the Local Authority of any Private Fostering Arrangement.
- The Local Authority will check that the child/young person are kept safe, well cared for (in appropriate accommodation) and happy.

3

Why does it matter?

- Private foster carers carry out a vital role in the welfare of children, and they are always offered support and guidance to carry out their roles – but it can only be offered if the arrangement is known. Many private fostering arrangements can remain hidden, which could put children at risk of abuse. For example, Victoria Climbié was a child brought into the UK by a distant relative, who went on to abuse and neglect Victoria and cause her death - this was an unreported Private Fostering Arrangement.

To find out more, read the **Inquiry by Lord Laming**