

Private Fostering

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The law regarding private fostering changed greatly following the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000 who was privately fostered by her Great Aunt. Legislation introduced after Victoria's death requires local authorities to be proactive in investigating potential private fostering arrangements. This law extends to schools and we are trained to identify and report private fostering arrangements to the local authority.

What is private fostering?

Private fostering is an arrangement whereby a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if the child has a disability) ([S.66 Children Act 1989](#)) is placed for 28 days or more in the care of someone who is not the child's parent(s) or a 'connected person'.

It is imperative that the local authority are notified if a child is living with someone who is not their parent or a 'connected person' for longer than 28 days. The local authority need to be satisfied that the placement is suitable and the child is safe. To be defined as 'private fostering', the child must be living with that person for longer than 28 days and this should be continuous but can include occasional short breaks.

Are you caring for someone else's child?

If you are caring for a child on a full time basis and you are not the child's parent or close relative you may be viewed as a private foster carer.

Is your child living with someone else?

If your child is living with someone else on a full time basis and is not living with a relative or someone who has parental responsibility, he or she may be considered to be privately fostered.

What does the law say?

The law states that carers and parents must notify the Local Council's Children's Services of any private fostering before the arrangement begins. If the arrangement has already begun, then you must notify them immediately. You will then be contacted by a social worker who will visit and discuss the arrangements with you. Children's services must make sure the child is safe, healthy and happy, and offer support and advice to private foster carers and parents where needed.

If you know of a child being privately fostered, please don't ignore it. Speak to the child's carer or contact:

Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

To speak to the team – (01432) 260800

To email the team – cypd@herefordshire.gov.uk