

Private Fostering

Information for professionals



this is Redcar & Cleveland

What is Private Fostering?

A Privately Fostered child is a child under 16 (or under 18 if the child has a disability) cared for and accommodated by someone other than:

- A parent
- A person who is not the parent but who has parental responsibility
- A close relative (Grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt)

for a period intended to last more than 28 days.

Private Fostering is based on parental consent – if a parent has not agreed for someone else to look after their child, then the arrangement is not Private Fostering.

Private Fostering arrangements are quite separate from arrangements made by the Local Authority for 'children looked after' and living with foster carers.

Private Fostering covers many situations, including children who are temporarily away from their families, children of overseas students and refugee or displaced children. This includes children who have had a disagreement with their parents and have gone to live with a neighbour or a school friend's family.

What are the Local Authority's responsibilities?

Although it is a private arrangement, there are certain duties and responsibilities under the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 to ensure that children who are Privately Fostered are protected. It is the job of the Local Authority to check that these regulations are being observed.

By law they must make regular visits to make sure that children are safe and well cared for. They have to check various aspects of the Private Fostering arrangement, including carrying out checks on the Private Foster Carers and their premises, to make sure that the arrangement is a suitable one. The Local Authority must also provide advice to Private Foster Carers.

The Local Authority do not approve Private Foster Carers but they have the power to stop a person from Private Fostering if the care is not suitable, or the accommodation is not suitable. On the other hand, if they consider something is not satisfactory, they can make the carer take action to sort out the problem, for example, by installing fire guards or smoke alarms.

What are the responsibilities of parents and Private Foster Carers?

When a child is Privately Fostered, the child's parents still have full responsibility in the eyes of the law. By law, the parents and carers, and any other person directly involved in arranging the placement, must notify the Local Authority about the arrangement. It is an offence not to tell the Local Authority about a Private Fostering arrangement.

Private Foster Carers are responsible for carrying out any duties agreed with the parents, and must allow a representative of the Local Authority to visit the child and the premises. Parents are expected to take part fully in planning for the child's future. It is expected that there will be a written agreement between the foster carer and the parents covering essential aspects of the arrangement.

What does it mean for the child?

Children in private foster placements have the same rights to protection and access to services as children living in their family home. The Local Authority being notified means that:

- They can carry out safeguarding checks
- That they can investigate the circumstances surrounding the arrangement
- They can listen to the young person's wishes and feelings
- Where appropriate, they can provide preventative and support services
- Where appropriate, they can provide support services after the end of the Private Fostering arrangement.

Who to notify if you are involved in or are aware of, a Private Fostering arrangement

If you want to notify the Local Authority about a Private Fostering arrangement or make further enquiries, please contact: **01642 771500**



If the answers to the following are 'Yes' then the arrangement is likely to come under Private Fostering regulations.

Private Fostering Checklist

	Yes	No
Is the child being provided with accommodation by someone other than a parent, a person with parental responsibility or a relative?		
Do the parents agree with the arrangement?		
Are the child's parents or the person with parental responsibility living in separate accommodation from the young person?		
Has the young person been accommodated for a period of more than 27 days? If not, is the intent to accommodate the child for a period of 27 days or more?		
If the placement is less than 27 days, is it one in a series of placements that add up to more than 27 days?		
The child is not a 'looked after child' where the Local Authority has arranged and paid for the placement.		
Does the Private Fostering arrangement better meet the needs of the young person than one made by Children in Need (Section 17 services to support the young persons in their family home)?		

Contact details

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council,
Children and Families Directorate,
Seafield House, Kirkleatham Street, Redcar, TS10 1SP

01642 771500

www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

**Out of hours and weekend contact
Emergencies Only**

08702 402994



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