

01 What is Private Fostering?

Where a private arrangement is made to look after a child who is under 16 years of age (under 18 if disabled) for more than 28 days, where the main carer is someone other than the child's parent, legal guardian, step-parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt or uncle. Children Act 1989 states that an aunt or uncle can be by full blood or affinity. 'Affinity' refers to the relationship resulting from marriage between husband and blood relations of the wife, and between the wife and blood relations of the husband.

02 Changes at age 16 or 18

Once a child reaches the age of 16 (18 if disabled) they are no longer considered a Privately Fostered child. Under The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, those qualifying for advice and assistance include any young person under the age of 21 (under 24 if in education or training) who ceases to be privately fostered after the age of 16. This refers only to disabled young people who continue to be considered as Privately Fostered children until they are 18 years of age.

03 The 1989 Children Act

Makes it "the duty of every Local Authority to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are Privately Fostered in their area is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, and to ensure such advice is given to those caring for them as appears to the Authority to be needed".

07 What should you do if you become aware of a Private Fostering arrangement?

Check if Children's Services has been notified. If not, you should then discuss this with the carers and parents and ensure they are aware that they must notify Children's Services. Contact CHECS on 0300 123 5012

06 Developments 17/18

During 2017/18 there were 9 private fostering notifications .
Private fostering arrangements are being recognised earlier and by a wider range of partners
Practice standards have been introduced to support practitioners and enable early alerts when these standards are not met
Increased activity during the North West's agreed Private Fostering week

05 Young Peoples feedback

Leaflets are okay and have enough information on them
They wanted to know what was going on for me, I felt listened to
I feel supported.
I was offered additional support for my GCSE's from school.
Don't like to ask for things as already putting roof over head and feeding me. Things like toiletries are expensive.

04 Notification

Both the child's parents and the Private Foster Carers have a duty to notify the Children's Services of the intention to place the child in private foster care no less than six weeks before and no more than 13 weeks before the arrangement is intended to start, unless it is made as an emergency, in which case notification shall not be more than 48 hours after the child has been placed with carers.
Any other person who discovers a Private Fostering arrangement or knows of a Private Fostering arrangement should inform Children's Services. They may be notified of a Private Fostering arrangement by the parent, carer, and another agency or by a member of the public.
Failure to notify Children's Services on the part of the carers or parent/s may be deemed an offence.

