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Private fostering

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Private fostering occurs when a child or young person under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for, and provided with accommodation for more than 28 days, by an adult who is not a relative, by private arrangement between the parent and carer.

The child would not be one that is looked after by a local authority under the Children Act.

Usually a birth parent chooses and arranges a private fostering placement and private foster carers do not hold parental responsibility.

Private fostering forms

Private fostering can take many forms, for example:

- Local children living apart from their families / relatives
- Adolescents and teenagers (possibly teenage parents)
- Black and minority ethnic children with parents studying or working in the UK
- Children with parents overseas
- Children on holiday exchange
- Refugee and homeless children
- Trafficked children

Relatives

The Children Act defines 'relatives' in relation to a child as:

- Grandparent
- Brother
- Sister
- Uncle
- Auntie

They could be full or half relation and could be related by marriage. The term also includes a step-parent.

A co-habit of the mother / father would not qualify as a relative; nor would extended family members such as a great aunt, great uncle or parent's cousins.

If a child is living with a carer who is not a relative as above, it is a private fostering placement.

The **law requires** parents, carers or anyone else making a private fostering arrangement to contact the local authority about it.

By contacting us the child's safety can be ensured. We will also make sure the child's wishes and feelings are listened to and where appropriate offer advice and support.

To learn more about private fostering please select the links below

- [What it means for the child](#)
- [Advice for professionals](#)
- [The role of the local authority](#)

We are here to offer help, support and advice.

To notify us about a private fostering arrangement please contact us on 01253 477299.

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