

Somebody else's child

What is private fostering?

Private fostering happens when a child is being looked after by someone other than a **close relative** for the majority of a four week period or more. This applies to any child up to the age of 16 years, or 18 years if the young person is disabled.

Because these care arrangements are made without the involvement of the local authority, we ask you to let us know about them so that we can provide the help and support needed.

Private fostering takes place for many reasons. For example the child's parents may be working or studying abroad or the relationship between the child and their parent has broken down and the child is living with a friend's family.

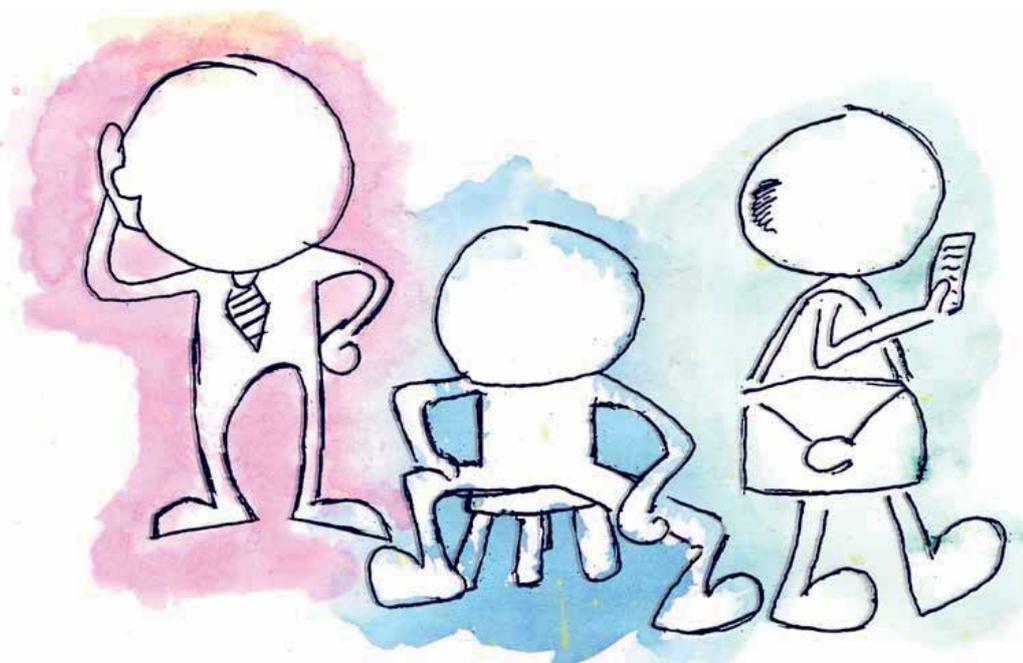
Who is considered a close relative?

Close relatives are a child's grandparents, parents, older brothers or sisters, blood-related aunts and uncles. In addition, any carer with a Residence Order or a Special Guardianship Order (granted by UK courts) is also counted as a close relative.

A child's cousins, great aunts and uncles, as well as parents' ex-partners, family friends and neighbours are not close relatives, even though they may have a close relationship with the child.

Regardless of how the arrangement came about, how good this is for the child, or how informal it is, if a child is being looked after by someone that is not a close relative, it is private fostering. You still have a duty to let us know.

- ✓ It's 'private' because you (or the child) arranged it of your own accord.
- ✓ It's 'fostering' because a child is being looked after and cared for by the carer.



I didn't know there was a legal duty to notify - what do I do now?

Some carers and parents are not aware of their legal duty to notify private fostering arrangements to the local authority. However private fostering is fully regulated by law provisions and the local authority has a duty to provide back-up in these cases.

It is essential that you contact us as soon as possible and let us know about this arrangement.

What happens when a notification is made?

When we are told about a private fostering arrangement, a private fostering officer will arrange to visit the private foster carer, child and parent within seven working days.

Once a private fostering arrangement is confirmed, the private fostering officer will visit and provide advice and support as necessary for the child, parents, and private foster carer.

The support we provide includes assistance for carers in applying for services, mediation between parents and carers if necessary, and ensuring that relevant financial support (for example child benefit) is received by the carers. We also work with the child to see how they feel about the situation, check they are being well cared for and going to school.

The local authority is required to complete a report and to visit the child at least once every six weeks during the first year and every 12 weeks after that. This will allow us to find out the best way to provide tailored support.

What if I think someone is being privately fostered?

If you think you know someone who is privately fostering a child, you can share the information in this leaflet with them or you can contact the local authority directly using the details below. We can provide more advice about private fostering and the support on offer.

Find out more

If you would like more information on private fostering call our specialist team on 0161 779 7860 or email privatefostering@salford.gov.uk

More information is also available on our website at www.partnersinsalford.org/sscb/privatefostering.htm