



# Private Fostering

A guide for parents, carers and professionals



**WARRINGTON**  
Borough Council

## Did you know?

If a child or young person under 16 years (or 18 if disabled) is staying with you for more than 28 days you could be a **private foster carer**. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family or the child's friend's parents or someone unknown who is willing to privately foster a child. A private foster carer is not a parent, step parent, legal guardian, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle (great aunt/great uncle are considered private foster carers.)

Examples of private fostering arrangements:

- children sent from abroad to stay with another family
- parents who are working abroad
- a parent is in hospital
- teenagers who have broken ties with their parents
- children living with host families whilst studying.

## What do you need to do?

Any parent, carer or professional who is aware of a private fostering arrangement is legally required to inform the local authority. It is vital that the council is aware of such arrangements so that they can safeguard the welfare of potentially vulnerable children.

If you are a parent making private fostering arrangements for your child, you need to let the council know in writing at least six weeks before the arrangement begins. If the arrangement is due to start in less than six weeks or the child is already living with the carer you need to let the council know immediately.

The council can help in completing a written agreement between the parent(s) and the carer, covering:

- arrangements for financially supporting the child
- permission for the carer to seek emergency medical treatment
- the plan to keep in contact with the child.



## Did you know?

If you are a carer about to enter into a private fostering agreement you need to:

- inform the council of the plans within six weeks before the arrangement begins. If the arrangement is due to start in less than six weeks or the child is already living you, you need to let the council know immediately
- have a prearranged visit from a social worker to your home to ensure it is safe and appropriate for the child to live there
- let the social worker meet any other adults who live in your home
- undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check on you and other adults in your home.

If you are a professional who works with children in education, health or social care you are likely to come across private fostering situations. As it is often the case that the council doesn't know about all private fostering arrangements you must:

- explain to the parents or the carers that they must notify the council of the private fostering arrangement immediately
- contact the council and give as much detail as you know about the arrangement.

Once the council has been informed of a private fostering arrangement, a representative will:

- visit the carer, the child and the carer's home within seven days
- talk to the child to find out how he or she feels about where they are living
- contact the parents to talk about the arrangement
- undertake an assessment of the child's needs and the suitability of the care arrangement



## Private foster carer

- make sure that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are completed on all adults in the carer's home
- continue to visit the child and carer at least every six weeks
- offer ongoing advice and guidance to the private foster carer.

These steps are carried out to make sure the child or young person is safe, well cared for and happy.

## Contact

01925 443400

[childreferral@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:childreferral@warrington.gov.uk)

[www.warrington.gov.uk](http://www.warrington.gov.uk)

If you are concerned about a child

Warrington Safeguarding Children Board

[wscb@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:wscb@warrington.gov.uk)

01925 443126

[www.warringtonlscb.org](http://www.warringtonlscb.org)

## Useful contacts and more information

[www.privatefostering.org.uk](http://www.privatefostering.org.uk)

Welfare Benefits advice line: 0844 357 1033

Relationship advice: [www.relateforparents.org.uk](http://www.relateforparents.org.uk)



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