



# Are you caring for someone else's child?

Private fostering  
information for carers





### What is Private Fostering?

Private Fostering is where a child under the age of 16 years (or under the age of 18 years old if disabled), lives with a person who is not a close relative for 28 days or more.

Essentially, carers may not know they are involved in the private fostering process; It is a private arrangement that starts without the involvement of the authorities. However, Children's Services must be notified.

Private fostering occurs when you are looking after somebody else's child for 28 days or more as a family friend or someone who is not a close relative of the child.

If you are a close family member eg aunt/uncle, brother/sister, grandparents or person with Parental Responsibility then the arrangement is not private fostering.

### Why does Private Fostering happen?

Parents might need to ask someone they trust, like you, to care for their child in a private arrangement.

These are just some of the scenarios in which private fostering can take place:

- The child and their parents are in conflict/have become estranged
- The child's parents are living abroad, away from their child
- The child's parent(s) are going to be admitted to hospital for a long period of time
- The child's parent(s) are going to, or are in prison
- The child is being cared for by a host family as part of a football academy
- The child or children are in boarding schools and do not return home during holidays
- You have brought a child from abroad for adoption

It is important that there has been a conversation between you, the private foster carer, and the child's parents, so you know why they want you to look after their child.

The child's health and education need to be discussed, and agreements should be made as to what to do if the child becomes ill or has an injury. Any financial arrangements also need to be agreed between yourself and the child's parents.

### What do you need to do?

The next steps would be to call us to register your situation and obtain further advice. It is a legal requirement to do so.

You will need to inform Children's Services about:

- The child's name, date of birth, religion, racial origin and language(s) spoken
- The length of time expected for the child to stay with you
- Names and address of both you and the child's parents
- The date the arrangement began, or the expected start date
- Your previous addresses from the past five years
- Any previous convictions you have (having convictions does not mean you are prevented from privately fostering a child, but must be considered)
- If you have been disqualified from private fostering before





## What help and support is available?

If the arrangement is assessed as suitable, a social worker will continue to support you, the parents and the child.

The social worker has a legal requirement to see children in private foster care regularly; this will be at least every six weeks. The social worker will request to see the child alone. They will also arrange a meeting with the you, the child's parents and relevant professionals during the assessment to consider any support needs.

Part of the plan could involve social workers signposting you to other agencies to help the child if necessary. Call us on:

Lancashire County Council - **0300 123 6720**

Blackpool Council - **01253 477299**

Blackburn with Darwen Council - **01254 666400**