



Private Fostering *Key facts*



Private fostering is when someone is looking after a child or young person under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) who is not a direct relative. This is sometimes referred to as 'hidden' fostering because private fostering arrangements are under-reported due to lack of public and professional awareness which may leave children vulnerable or at risk.

A PRIVATE FOSTER CARER IS NOT:

- A grandparent
- A brother or sister
- An uncle or aunt
- A foster carer approved by Solihull Council

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Professionals working in education, health and social care will often come across children and young people who are in private fostering arrangements. If you suspect that someone might be being privately fostered, you should call us on 0121 0121 788 4300 immediately. Private foster carers and the parents of the child have a legal duty to report the arrangement to the local authority so that the welfare of the child can be monitored.

Examples of private fostering situations include:

- Children living with a friend or extended family member due to problems at home such as illness or divorce
- Teenagers living with a girlfriend/boyfriend's family
- Children living with a host family whilst they attend boarding school/sports coaching while their parents are overseas
- Children living with the unmarried partner of his/her parent while the parent is in prison

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT?

In a private fostering arrangement the parent retains their parental responsibility and continues to have financial responsibility for their child. The private foster carer is responsible for:

- Facilitating the child's education - ensuring they attend school and complete homework
- Looking after the child's health including GP/dentist/optician appointments where necessary
- Ensuring the child or young person's cultural and religious needs are being met

The child should continue to have as much contact as possible with the parents during the arrangement.

WHAT IS SOLIHULL COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITY?

Upon being made aware of a private fostering arrangement, Solihull Council will allocate a social worker to the family. The social worker will gather all the necessary information to determine if the arrangement is suitable, meets the child(ren)'s needs and is safe. Where the private fostering arrangement is agreed by the local authority as suitable for the child(ren) the foster carer and the child will be visited every six weeks to ensure that the child's needs are being met and to provide support and guidance to the carer.

CONTACT US

If you become aware of a private fostering arrangement you should contact us immediately 0121 0121 788 4300. You should let the parent/carer know about the referral. If you have any concerns

about a child's welfare you should contact us on the number above.

For more information please visit <https://bit.ly/2krupeZ>