

What should professionals do?

Professionals should ensure that Children's Services know about all private fostering arrangements. This includes a wide range of people who come in contact with children including teachers, religious leaders, doctors and health visitors. Professionals should also encourage the child's parent or carer to notify social services. You will not be breaching confidentiality by notifying Children's Services, but you will be helping to safeguard a child.



What next?

Please contact Children's Services to find out more or inform them of a private fostering arrangement.

Telephone Number: **0300 126 1000**

01604 626 938 (out of hours)

Email Address:

MASH@northamptonshire.gcsx.gov.uk



my
county
council

Private Fostering?

Is your child living with another family?
Are you looking after someone else's child?

Rights and responsibilities for families
and professionals

This information can be provided in other languages and formats upon request including Braille, audio cassette and floppy disk.

For more information contact **0300 126 1000**.

What is private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child or young person under 16 years old (or 18 if they have a disability) is looked after for 28 days or more by someone who is not a close relative, guardian or person with parental responsibility. Close relatives include parents, step-parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents. It is not private fostering if the arrangement was made by Children's Services, or if the person looking after the child is an approved foster carer.

People become private foster carers for all sorts of reasons. Private foster carers can be a friend of the child's family, or be someone who is willing to care for the child of a family they do not know.

Common situations may be:

- Children, adolescents and teenagers living apart from their families
- Minority ethnic children with parents working or studying in the UK
- Children with parents overseas
- Children living with host families for a variety of reasons
- Children on holiday exchanges

Notifying Children's Services

What the law says

By law, Children's Services must be informed about all private fostering situations. The child's parent(s), private foster carer and anyone else involved in the arrangement are legally required to inform Children's Services.

People involved in private fostering must inform social services within the following timescales:

If the child is not yet living with private foster carers	Six weeks beforehand
If the child will move in with private foster carers in less than six weeks	Immediately
If the child is already living with private foster carers	Immediately



What will Children's Services do?

Children's Services will work in partnership with the child, parents and private foster carer to ensure that the best possible arrangements are in place for the child. This includes:

- Visiting the child and private foster carer
- Helping to make sure that the child's racial, cultural, linguistic and religious needs are being met
- Offering advice and support to the child, their parents and private foster carer

