

Private Fostering  
- Improvement Workshop

What does Good look Like for Children  
and Young People?

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By  
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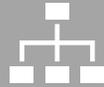


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# Workshop objectives



Today is about:



Private Fostering – What is it and what we need to do?



'What Good looks like for children and young people in West Sussex'

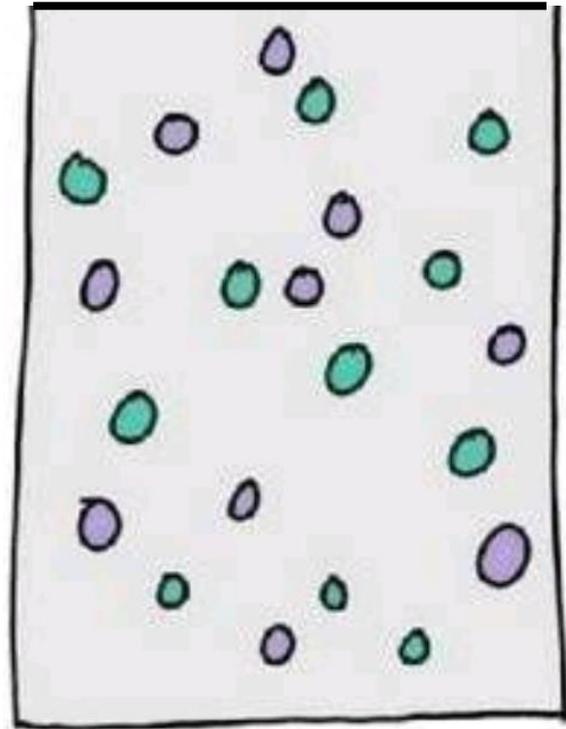


Identification of children and young people as Private Fostering is incredibly important – they are vulnerable and quite often hidden

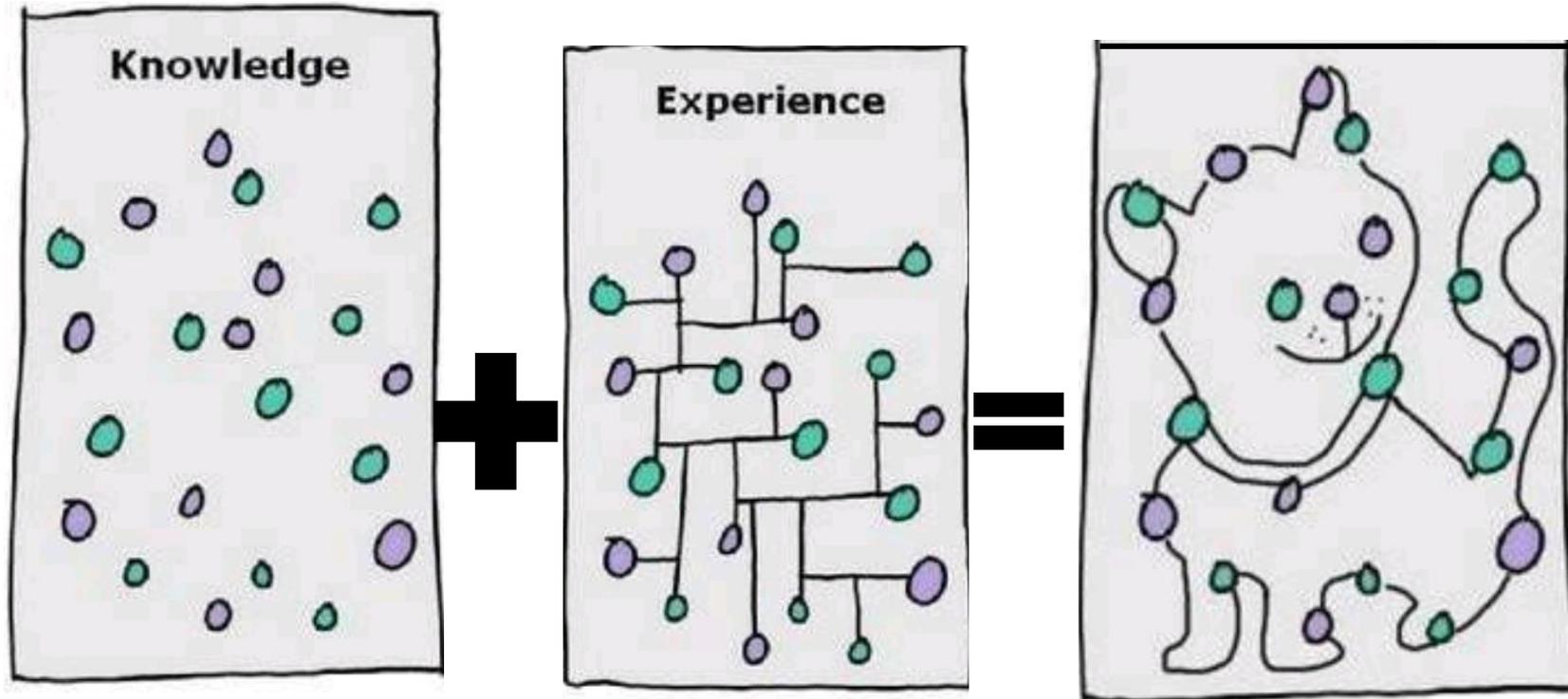


...You making a difference

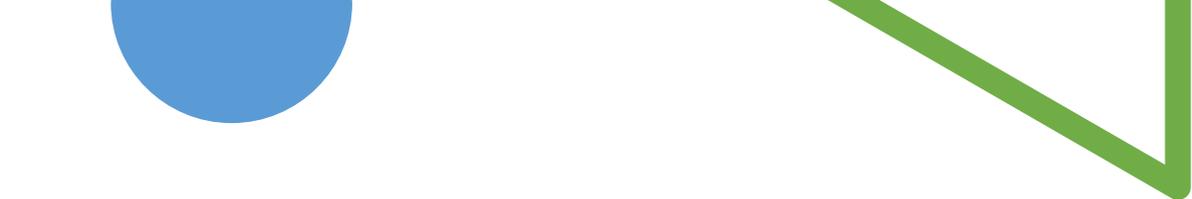
**Make sense of the dots...**



# In practice... we do this:



**Underpinned by professional Curiosity**



# Relevant legislation and guidance

The 1989 Children Act states *“It shall be the duty of every Local Authority to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are privately fostered in their area is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, and to secure such advice is given to those caring for them as appears to the Authority to be needed”*

## **Puts emphasis on:**

- The need to notify the LA of all PF arrangements
  - The duty to promote knowledge and awareness of PF in the public and agencies involved with children and young people
- 



# Introduction

- Private Fostering Arrangements can be a positive response from within the community to difficulties experienced by families. Nonetheless, privately fostered children remain a diverse and potentially vulnerable group
- Overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the privately fostered child remains with the parent or other person with Parental Responsibility
- Local Authorities do not formally approve or register Private Foster Carers. However, it is the duty of Local Authorities to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are, or will be, privately fostered within their area is being, or will be, satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted.

# What is Private Fostering?

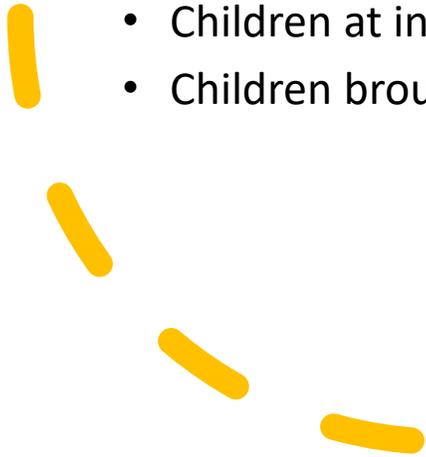
Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 – under 18 if disabled – is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a "close relative". This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, for **28 days or more**.

## **Close relatives are:**

- step-parents
- grandparents
- brothers or sisters
- uncles or aunts, whether of full blood, half blood, marriage or affinity
- All parents and private foster carers must notify us to avoid missing out on welfare checks for the children, and other support services.



# Common situations in which children are privately fostered include:

- Children with parents or families overseas
  - Children with parents working or studying in the UK
  - Asylum seekers and refugees
  - Trafficked children
  - Local children living apart from their families
  - Adolescents and teenagers
  - Children attending language schools
  - Children at independent boarding schools who do not return home for holidays
  - Children brought in from abroad with a view to adoption
- 



# Victoria Climbie

- Victoria was brought to the UK in 1999 from the Ivory Coast via France by her great aunt Therese-Marie Kouao and her partner, a stranger to the child. This was a private fostering arrangement as the great-aunt is not defined as a close relative
- Therese-Marie Kouao offered Victoria's parents the chance of a good education for their daughter.
- On 25 February 2000, Victoria died. She was systematically beaten and tortured and left to die of hypothermia and starvation.

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- The Home Office Pathologist found 128 separate injuries on Victoria's body and stated 'it was the worse case of child abuse I have encountered'.
  - In Lord Laming's inquiry into Victoria's death, he highlighted concerns about arrangements for children who are in private foster care.
  - Subsequent guidance has emphasized the duty of local authorities to safeguard privately fostered children.

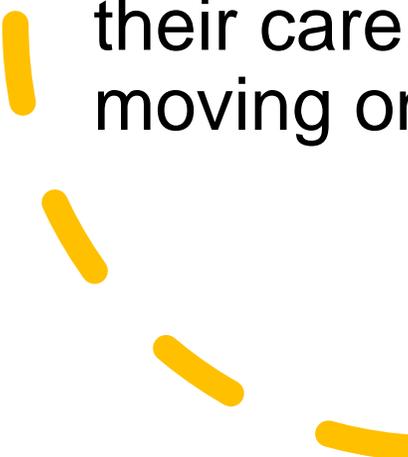


Victoria  
Climbie ...



# What private foster carers need to do?

The law says private foster carers in West Sussex must advise us of their intention to foster a child at least 6 weeks in advance, or in emergency cases within 4 hours of the child's arrival.



Private foster carers must also let us know when a child leaves their care, giving the name and address of the person they are moving on to.

# What birth parents need to do?

- Birth parents must pass on as much information as possible about the child to the carers, such as:
  - health records
  - dietary requirements
  - school records
  - hobbies
  - religion
- If the private foster carer hasn't informed us of the arrangement then the birth parent should do so as soon as possible.

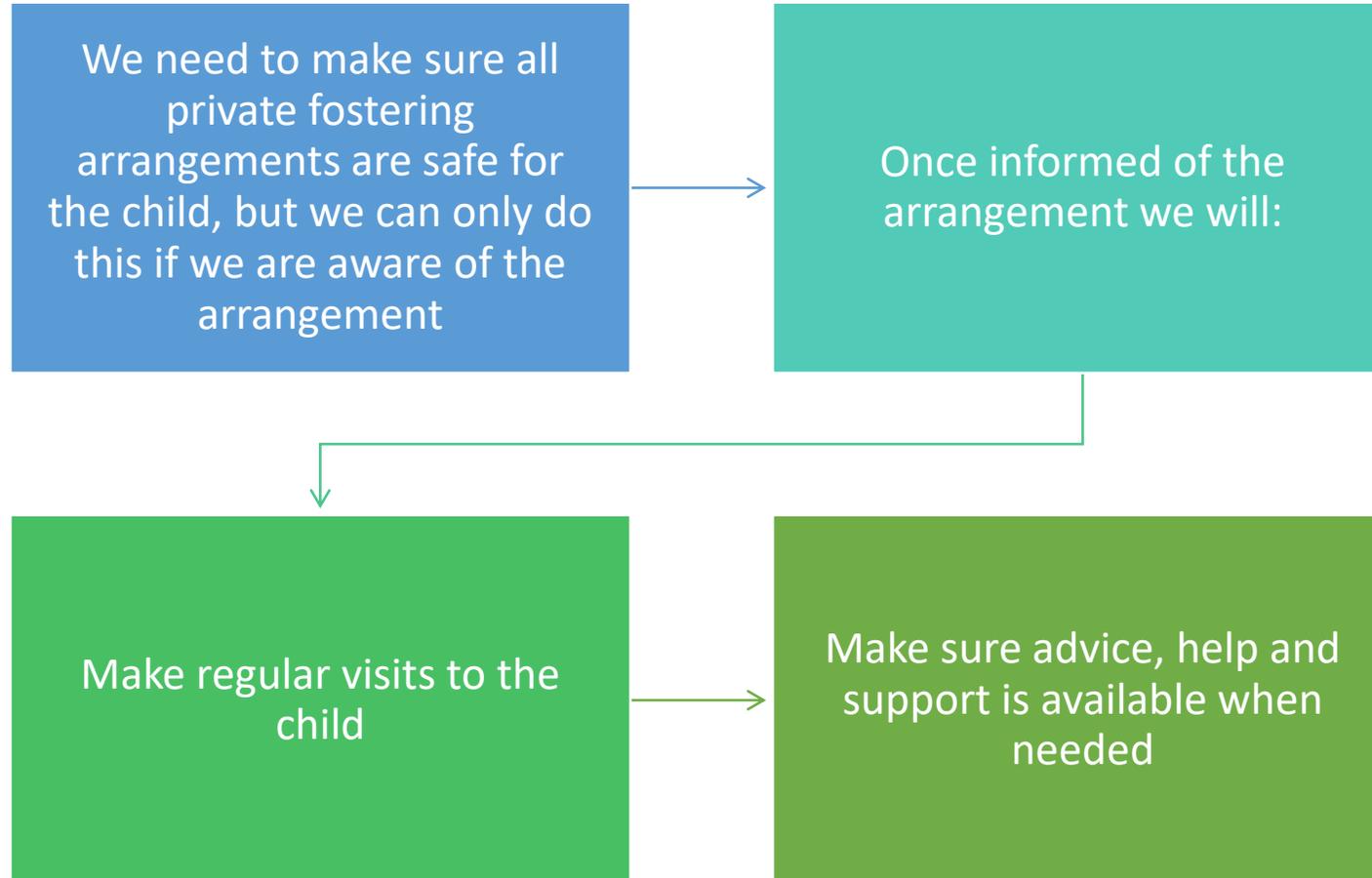


Voice recording: Rebecca Walsh Group Manager  
West Sussex

- The process and how we work?

This audio clip is also available on tri x after the workshop

# What we will do?

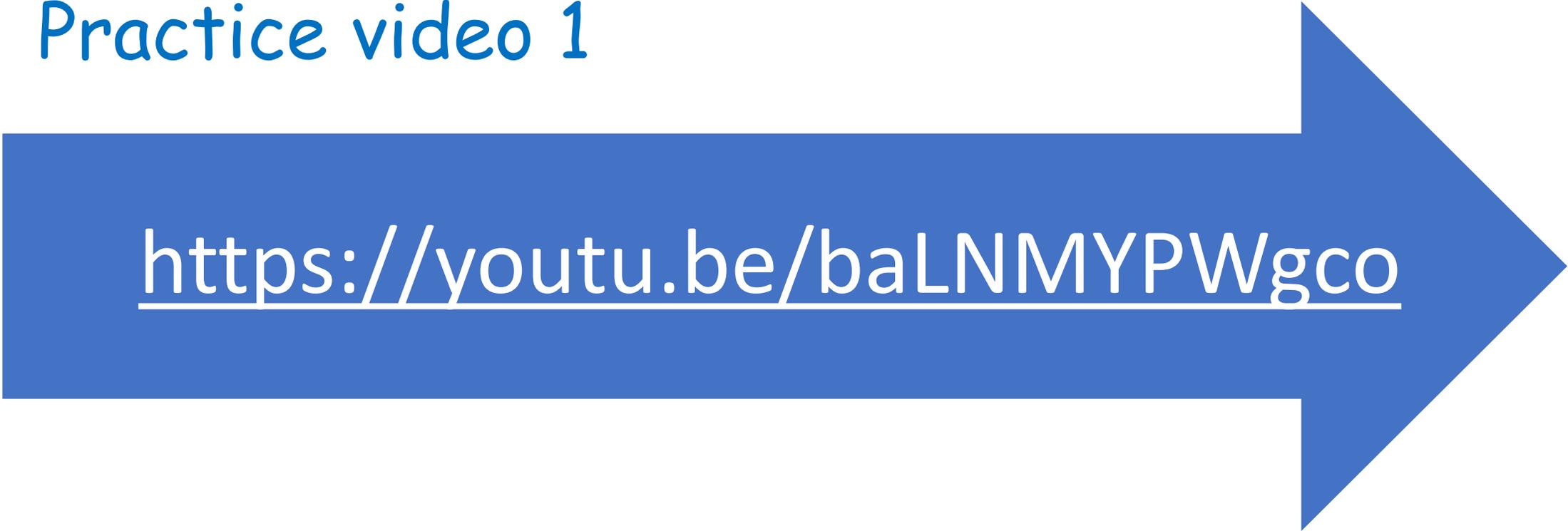


# Cultural and ethnic issues

- It is important that children who are privately fostered maintain their sense of cultural and racial identity and that their particular needs (diet, skin care and hair care for example) are understood and met by their foster parents
- Social workers or health visitors can give advice on these issues
- If a foreign child is privately fostered the carers should make sure that immigration papers are in order and that the child's immigration status is clear.

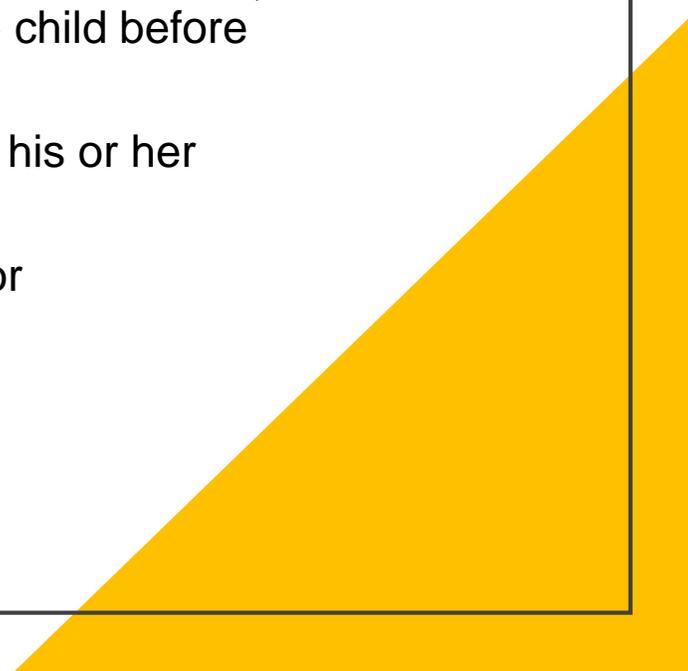
**Children who are privately fostered and  
their lived experiences...**

Practice video 1



<https://youtu.be/baLNMYPWgco>

# Checklist for private fostering

- ensure the child is enrolled in school
  - let us know that you intend to foster
  - get written consent from parents to have care of the child
  - keep in touch with the child's parents
  - make sure you have background information, including medical history, for the child before you foster
  - if the child is from abroad check his or her immigration status
  - register the child with your doctor
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- A large yellow triangle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right.



**Low  
notifications  
= invisible  
children =  
safeguarding  
concerns**

Many children who are privately fostered are not known to services, institutions or people working with them



These children are much more vulnerable because of their 'invisibility' and because services do not always record and report information about them



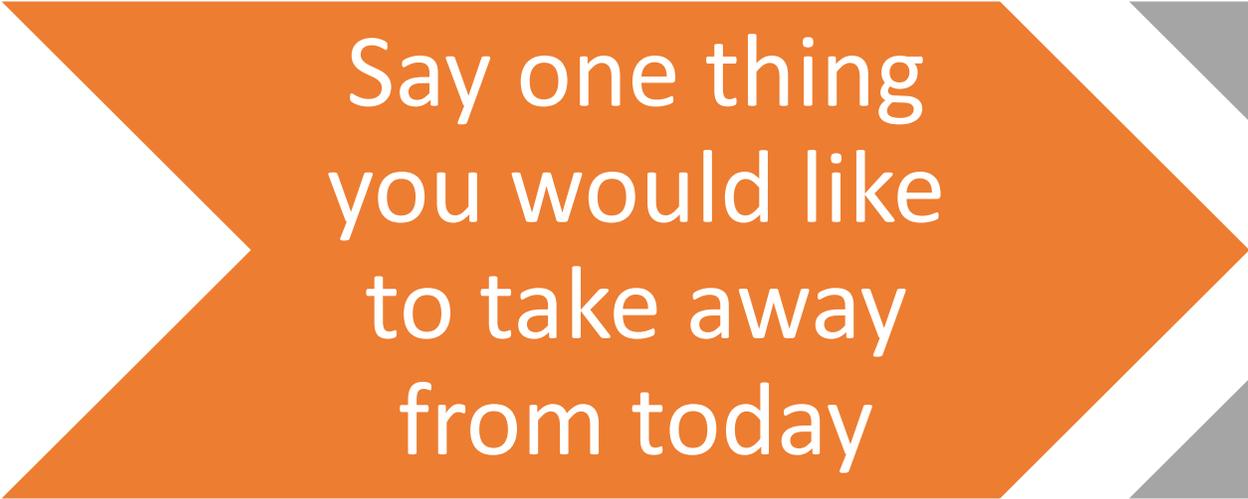
Identifying, recording and reporting children who may be privately fostered/ a young carer is **everyone's responsibility** – the responsibility falls on all those people or agencies who meet them.

**A final pause for thought...**

**Private Fostering is not permanence.**

Are these any of your cases?

**All queries can be sent to [private.fostering@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:private.fostering@westsussex.gov.uk)  
and the team will make contact for case discussions/  
consultation**



Say one thing  
you would like  
to take away  
from today



THANK YOU !