

Background

Since the Children Act 2004, it has been a legal responsibility for a Local Authority to know about children and young people who are Privately Fostered. Children's Services have a duty to assess and monitor arrangements to make sure the child or young person is safe and their needs are being met.

Why does it matter?

It is believed a lot of children are living in these circumstances unrecognised which could put children at risk of abuse. Victoria Climbié was a child brought into the UK by a distant relative who went on to abuse Victoria and cause her death - This was an unreported Private Fostering Arrangement.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273183/5730.pdf

Legal requirement

Private Fostering is only legitimate if the parent has made the arrangement with the carer and the Local Authority is notified and in agreement. By law, parents/carers must notify the Local Authority of any Private Fostering Arrangement. The Local Authority will check that the child/young person are kept safe, well cared for (in appropriate accommodation) and happy.

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Examples of children who may become Privately Fostered

- A child or young person sent (for educational or medical purposes) from another country to live with someone who is not their parent, carer with parental responsibility or close relative whilst their parents remain abroad
- A child or young person living with a family friend as a result of their parents breaking up, family fall out or a parent in hospital or in custody

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What is Private Fostering?

Private Fostering is a term used when someone who is not a parent, carer with parental responsibility or a 'close relative' (a close relative includes grandparent, aunt, uncle or sibling) is looking after a child or young person under 16 (18 if the young person has a disability) for 28 days or more in their own home. Private Fostering also covers children or young people who stay at a residential school for more than two weeks during the school holidays.

Start

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7 Minute Briefing on Private Fostering

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What to do

Education, Health and Social Care are often the first to become aware of a Private Fostering Arrangement. If you know or suspect a child or young person is being Privately Fostered, you should notify Bradford Children's Services immediately. **You should inform the parent and/or carer about Private Fostering and inform that a referral is being made.**

Notification

Parents and carers have a legal requirement to notify the Local Authority of a proposed Private Fostering Arrangement 6 weeks prior to the arrangement being in place, or, if in an emergency, as soon as possible. Parents are responsible for providing the carer with all the information needed to care for the child/young person. **Contact to be made to Bradford Children's Services by calling 01274 435600 or e-mailing childrens.enquiries@bradford.gov.uk**

