



One minute briefing

Private Fostering

Private fostering is when a child or young person under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for and provided with accommodation by an adult who is **not a close relative** for 28 days or more.

Close relatives include:

- aunt
- uncle
- step-parent
- grandparent
- sibling

A cousin, great aunt or great uncle is not considered a close relative.

Private fostering arrangements are made **between the parent and the private foster carer**. Many families and individuals do not know that their living situation is considered to be private fostering.

All professionals have a legal duty to notify Children's Social Care if they think a child may be living in a private fostering arrangement.

Examples of private fostering include:

- a child or young person is sent to this country for education or health care by their birth parents from overseas and reside with a family friend.
- a child or young person who is living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or arguments at home.
- a child or young person who is living with one of their parents' partner's family.
- children attending language schools from abroad and stay with host families for more than 28 days during holidays.
- children attending independent boarding schools, who do not return home during the summer holidays.

Referral and assessment process of potential private foster carer:

1. If any professional becomes aware of a private fostering arrangement, a referral should be made to Stronger Families Hub.
2. Stronger Families Hub, in consultation with private fostering lead will make relevant enquiries and confirm if the arrangement meets the criteria for private fostering.
3. Child / young person is allocated to a social worker within Referral and Assessment Service to complete a Child & Family (C&F) assessment. Where possible the first visit will be undertaken jointly with the private fostering lead.
4. Once C&F assessment is completed the child/young person will transfer to the private fostering lead via Fostering Manager. If the C&F assessment determines the child/ren to be a child in need as well as meeting private fostering criteria then case to be held jointly by Children's Social Work Team and private fostering lead.
5. Private fostering lead should complete a private fostering assessment, separate to the C&F assessment, and seek authorisation from the Head of Service.



6. DBS checks should be completed on all private fostering household members over the age of 16 years as soon as possible and then every 3 years.
7. All Private fostering placements should be monitored and supported through 6 weekly visits. These visits should be undertaken by the private fostering lead and if a child is on a CIN plan, visits shared with the allocated Children's Social Work Team social worker.
8. The placement is monitored on a 6 weekly basis until young person reaches age 16 (18 if child with a disability). As good practice cases are not automatically closed at age 16 years, support can be offered for a few months longer where necessary (as part of the CIN plan) or requested by young person and carer or until the parents advise that the placement has ended i.e. child returning to their care or to that of an immediate family member.
9. Private fostering arrangement is reviewed annually through consultation with child, the carer, parents and any other professional involved with the child / young person by the private fostering lead.
10. If the placement is ended and child is returning to parents or immediate family member, private fostering lead should ensure that a referral is made to the responsible local authority if they have any concerns about the child's return.

The law relating to private fostering falls under the **Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005**. Under this act there is a legal requirement that the council must be notified of all private fostering arrangements.

To have an informal discussion if you are unsure if a child is in a private fostering arrangement please contact Monique Smuts: email msmuts@hillingsdon.gov.uk

To make a notification contact please follow the link:

[Stronger Families Hub - Information for professionals - Hillingdon Council](#)

Hillingdon Council

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