

Have you arranged for someone else to look after your child?
If so this could be a private fostering arrangement and you need to let us know



PRIVATE FOSTERING IN

Birmingham

**Information
for parents**



A great city to grow up in



**BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

As the child's parent you retain parental responsibility for your child and this includes the financial responsibility for your child's needs

What is private fostering?

Private fostering is an arrangement by which a child or young person under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability) does not live with a parent or close relative. For the purpose of private fostering close relatives are a grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or step parent by marriage.

Many parents who have arranged for someone else to care for their child often don't realise they have entered into a private fostering arrangement.

If your child is being cared for by an adult carer who is NOT a close relative in a different home to you for a continuous period of 28 days or more, this is a private fostering arrangement. Some examples of private fostering include:

- children and young people who are sent to this country for education or health care by their birth parents from overseas;
- a teenager living with a friend's family because of strained relationships at home or because the parents move out of the area and don't want to disrupt their child's education;

- children or teenagers on school holiday exchanges that last more than 28 days;
- a child left with the unmarried partner of his/her parent because of the imprisonment of the parent;
- where a child stays with a host family during term-time so they can attend professional sports coaching or study at a language school; or,
- where a child is at boarding school and stays with another family during the summer holidays, where this is longer than 28 days.

What should I do if I think I have made, or want to make, a private fostering arrangement?

Even though this is a private arrangement. The law says that the local authority (Birmingham Children's Trust) must ensure your child is safe and well cared for. So if you are thinking of placing your child in a private fostering arrangement, you must tell us at least six weeks beforehand or in case of an emergency placement, within 48 hours of the placement beginning.

If the arrangement has already started, you must contact us immediately.



You should always contact Birmingham Children's Trust, even if you are not sure that the arrangement is private fostering, because parents have a legal obligation to do so and it is an offence not to inform us about a private fostering arrangement.

Am I giving up all rights to my child?

No, as the child's parent you retain parental responsibility for your child and this includes the financial responsibility for your child's needs. You should remain involved in all the decisions made about your child and you should continue to have contact with your child.

It is recommended that a written agreement is drawn up between the parents and the carer outlining the arrangements for the child and expectations of the placement. We can help provide advice and support with written agreements.

What should I tell the carer?

You should give the carer as much information as you can about your child, including information about their health, school, religion, hobbies, eating preferences, bedtime routines and ethnic and cultural background. This information will help the carer to understand your child and ensure that all their needs are met.



The carer will also need to arrange medical and dental care, ensure your child attends school and help them to keep in touch with you where possible.

What is the Trust responsible for?

We work with parents, private foster carers, the child and anyone else involved in the arrangement, to ensure that everyone is aware of, and understands, their responsibilities.

A social worker will visit the home where your child will stay and talk to the carer and other people living in their household to check they are suitable to care for your child and that the place where your child will be staying is safe and of adequate standard. We can also give advice, training and help to the carer when needed.

The social worker will visit the child or young person every six weeks in the first year to ensure that the arrangements continue to be suitable for your child and regularly review the arrangement. We will keep you informed of their progress.

Contact information

To tell us about a private fostering arrangement or make further enquiries, please call **0121 303 1888** or email the Children's Advice and Information Service (CASS) at **CASS@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk**

Further information is also available on our website at **birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/privatefostering**

If you have any other concerns about a child's welfare, you should notify the local children's social care team immediately, via the CASS details above.

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in another language, in large print, in Braille or on audio tape or CD, please call **0121 303 3401** or email **trustcomms@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk**

