



**Safeguarding
Children Partnership**
STOKE-ON-TRENT

Private Fostering

Information for parents and carers



What is private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child or young person who is under the age of 16 (or under the age of 18 if they have a disability) is cared for and lives with an adult who is not a close relative, for 28 days or more.

A close relative is an aunt, uncle, stepparent, grandparent or sibling.

A cousin, great aunt/uncle, great grandparent or family friend is not a close relative.

Who is responsible for the child/young person?

When a child is privately fostered their parents still have full parental responsibility. The law requires that parents, carers or anyone else involved in the arrangement must notify the local authority 6 weeks before the arrangement begins or as soon as they become aware of it. It is an offence not to notify the local authority.

The child's parents should provide as much information as they possibly can about the child including their health, education, likes/dislikes, hobbies, religion, ethnic and cultural background. This will assist the private foster carer to understand them better so that they can take good care of them.

Financial arrangements for the care of the child should be agreed between the parent(s) and the private foster carer(s).

What situation would be classed as private fostering?

The reasons why parents seek private foster carers for their children are diverse but can include:

- Children from overseas attending schools in the UK.
- Children living apart from their families due to parental or family problems.
- Teenagers living with friends, or friend's parent/carer, where relationships at home have broken down.
- Unaccompanied minors who are living with friends or relatives.
- Children being cared for by family friends whilst a parent is serving a prison sentence.

A child or young person who is Looked After by a local authority or placed in a residential home, hospital or school is excluded from the definition.

What will Stoke-on-Trent City Council do?

Following receipt of a private fostering notification, a social worker will undertake an assessment to ensure that the arrangement is suitable for the child. The social worker will also undertake necessary safeguarding checks of the carer and anyone else over the age of 18 years. This will include DBS checks.

The social worker will ensure that the arrangement remains suitable and consider if any additional support is needed. The social worker will usually talk to the child on their own to check if they have any concerns or worries.

If the arrangement is deemed appropriate, the child's allocated social worker will visit at least every 6 weeks during the first year of the arrangement. After the first year this will change to at least once every 3 months.

What if the child leaves my care?

You must inform Stoke-on-Trent City Council within 48 hours. You must also provide the name and address of the person that is now caring for them.