

# Private Fostering

## A Guide for Professionals

ISLINGTON  
SAFEGUARDING  
CHILDREN BOARD

ISCB



Working together to safeguard  
all Islington's children



# What is private fostering?

A private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

**A child may be privately fostered if s/he does not live with:**

- Parent or legal guardian
- Grandparent
- Brother or sister
- Aunt or uncle
- Step-parent (who is married or in a civil partnership with their biological parent.)

The arrangement is made between the child's parents and the private foster carer whose responsibility is the day-to-day care of the child.

**Some common examples of private fostering:**

- A teenager who isn't getting on with their parents goes to live with a friend's family.
- Parents pay someone to care for their children while they are away working or studying.
- Children are sent from abroad to live with other families in the UK.
- Children are placed with a family friend or relative as a result of parental separation, divorce, arguments at home, or a parent being hospitalised.

# Help and Assessment

Life is full of different pressures, particularly for parents. Where possible, children should live with their family but pressures and circumstances sometimes cause children to live away from their parents. This will not always lead to a private fostering arrangement, but where it does the local authority must be aware of these children, assess their needs, ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for their care and regularly visit the child(ren) during the private fostering arrangement.

Targeted and Specialist Children and Families Services will support children in private fostering places, which may include work to reunite children with their parents or supporting the private fostering arrangement more generally. Occasionally private fostering arrangements may identify children in need of protection because of trafficking, child sexual exploitation, or other forms of abuse.

# Professional Responsibilities

What should I do if I am a professional working with a family where I suspect a child is likely to be or already has been privately fostered?

Professionals should always be alert to the possibility that a child is or could become privately fostered. If you are working with a child where arrangements are currently being made or you believe a child is already privately fostered in Islington, please call Targeted and Specialist Children and Families Service on **020 7527 7400**.

As a professional you are legally responsible to inform the Local Authority of any private arrangements that you are aware of.



Islington Safeguarding Children Board  
3 Elwood Street  
London N5 1EB

Tel: 020 7527 4209/4234

Visit: [www.islingtonscb.org.uk](http://www.islingtonscb.org.uk)