



Who to notify if you are involved in, or are aware of a private fostering arrangement:

**The Children's Hub  
Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees  
Child & Adult Services Department  
Civic Centre  
Victoria Road  
Hartlepool  
TS24 8AY**

**Telephone: 01429 284284**

**Emergency Duty Team Out of Hours  
Telephone: 08702 402994**

**Or**

**Email: [childrenshub@hartlepool.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:childrenshub@hartlepool.gcsx.gov.uk)**



## **PRIVATE FOSTERING**

### **What is private fostering?**

#### **An information guide & essential facts for professionals about private fostering**

A privately fostered child is a child under 16 (or under 18 if the child has a disability) cared for and accommodated by someone other than:

- a parent,
- a person who is not the parent but who has parental responsibility; or
- a close relative (Grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, sister, step parent)

And the length of stay is intended to last **more than 28 days**.

Private fostering is based on parental consent - if a parent has not agreed for someone else to look after their child, then the arrangement is not private fostering.

Private fostering arrangements are quite separate from arrangements made by Local Authority for 'children looked after' and living with foster carers.

Private fostering covers many situations, including children who are temporarily away from their families, refugees or displaced children, children who have had a disagreement with their parents and have gone to live with neighbour or a school friend's family, or their boyfriends / girlfriends family.



## What are the Children's Services responsibilities?

The law says that the Local Authority must be told so that they can make sure the child is well cared for.

The Local Authority will:

- make regular visits to make sure that children are safe and well cared for.
- check different aspects of the private fostering arrangement, to make sure that the arrangement is a suitable one, including carrying out checks on the foster carers and their premises.
- provide advice and guidance to private foster carers.

The Local Authority **do not approve** private foster carers but

- they have the power to stop a person from private fostering if the carer or accommodation is not suitable.
- if they consider something is not satisfactory they can make the carer take action to sort out the problem, for example, by installing fireguards or smoke alarms.

## What are the responsibilities of parents and Private Foster Carers?

A Private Foster Carer must arrange the child's medical and dental care and make sure the child goes to school, they must offer the child a safe and loving place to live and help the child keep in touch with their own family and a Social Worker.

Private Foster Carers must tell the Local Authority if anyone else comes to live with them and when the child leaves their care giving details of whose care the child has moved into.

## Is there a limit to how many children a carer can Privately Foster?

Yes, they are not usually permitted to privately foster more than 3 children at a time unless they are brothers and sisters.



## What does it mean for the child?

Children in private foster placements have the same rights to protection and access to services as children living in their family home. The Local Authority being notified means that:

- they can carry out safeguarding checks;
- that they can listen to the child's wishes and feelings;
- where appropriate, they can provide preventative and support services; and
- where appropriate, they can provide support services after the end of the private fostering arrangement.

## Are you or do you know somebody that is Privately Fostering?

If the answers to the following questions are **'yes'** then the arrangement is likely to come under private fostering regulations.

- **is the child being provided with accommodation by someone other than a parent, a person with parental responsibility or a close relative?**
- **do the parents agree with the arrangement?**
- **are the child's parents or the person with parental responsibility living in separate accommodation from the young person?**
- **has the young person been accommodated for a period of more than 28 days? If not, is the intent to accommodate the child for a period of 28 days or more?**
- **If you are in doubt about whether the arrangement is Private Fostering contact Children's Services, (details overleaf) to discuss.**

