



Who to contact if this information is difficult to understand or you would like to speak to someone:

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

### Is someone else's child living with you?

An information guide & essential facts for private foster carers about private fostering

If you have someone else's child living in your home you may be a private foster carer.

Answering **yes** to all of the following questions regardless of whether you are receiving any payment could mean you are a private foster carer:

- Are you looking after someone else's child?
- Is the child going to be living with you 28 days or more?
- You are NOT the child's grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, step parent, legal guardian, or other person with parental responsibility?
- Is under the child under age 16 (or 18 if they are disabled)?



## What is Private Fostering?

Parents can often ask people they trust to look after their children for many reasons:

Examples include:

- they are going into hospital for a long time,
- children living with a friend's family as a result of arguments at home,
- teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend.

If this situation lasts 28 days or more, that carer becomes a private foster carer.

It is important that parents and carers have discussed why they want the child to be looked after, for how long and what should happen if the child falls ill or has an accident. Their education and health needs in addition to making financial arrangements, should be discussed.

## Notification to Children's Services

If you are already privately fostering, or you intend to privately foster a child you are required by law to inform Children's Services as soon as possible. (Contact details are on the back of this leaflet.)

Children's Services have a duty to make sure all privately fostered children are safeguarded and that their wellbeing is promoted.



## What will Children's Services do?

Children's Services will work in partnership with the child, parents and you the private foster carer to ensure you have all the support and advice you need, in addition to establishing your household is safe and suitable for the child.

They will also:

- help and support you to work together with the child's parents,
- help to make sure the best possible arrangements are in place for the child's health and educational needs.
- help to make sure that the child's racial, cultural, linguistic and religious needs are being met,
- discuss arrangements with the child (if appropriate),
- notify other agencies of the arrangements.

## Finance

Finance for the child needs to be agreed between you and the child's parents. The parents will need to inform the Child Benefit Agency that the child is no longer living with them and is now living with you. If you are claiming benefits you may be entitled to claim benefit for the child if the parents are receiving benefits themselves.

## Working Together

It is important that you work together with the parents of the child and Children's Services and the child sees you are working together for their benefit. This will help the child settle into their new home and reduce some of the anxieties they may have about living with you.

Training opportunities will be available to you through Children's Services which could be invaluable to you when dealing with situations new to you.

