

Private Fostering

Questions to consider & discuss

- Are there children in our care who could be in these arrangements?
- Do we know what to do if we think a child or young person is being privately fostered?
- Complete our [action plan](#)

For more information visit the MCC website:
www.manchester.gov.uk or the MSB website
www.manchestersafeguardingboards.co.uk

What to do

Notification of a PF arrangement **should** come from the parent or carer, but professionals can help in identifying these arrangements and advising parents and carers of their responsibilities.

If you know a child is being privately fostered, and you think the council is unaware, please notify them on **0161 234 5001** or encourage the carer or parent to do so.

You will not be breaching confidentiality.

Examples of PF arrangements

- children sent to this country, for education, sports schools or for health care by parents who live overseas
- teenagers who live with their partner's family
- a teenager living with a friend's family because they don't get on with their own family
- children living with a friend's family because their parents' study or work involves unsociable hours, making it difficult to use ordinary day care or after-school care
- children or teenagers on holiday exchanges for more than 28 days.

Background

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (i.e. 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.

The local authority has a legal responsibility to recognise, monitor and support privately fostered children (Children's Act 2004).

Once a referral is made children's social care will visit and check the arrangement is suitable.

Why it matters

It is estimated that around 10,000 children & young people are privately fostered.

In over 50% of cases the local authority is not being notified and when they are informed, it is nearly always after the arrangement has started.

This is a huge cause for concern, as privately fostered children without the protection provided by the local authority are a particularly vulnerable group. Victoria Climbié was privately fostered by a relative who went on to abuse and murder her.

Information

A child who is privately fostered is a child or young person looked after by someone **other than** a parent, step-parent, sibling, aunt, uncle or grandparent for a period of more than 28 days.

Support and advice will be offered to all parties involved with a private fostering arrangement.

Requirements

A Private Fostering (PF) arrangement is only legitimate if the parent gives **informed** consent; **and** the local authority knows about and agrees with the arrangement.

It is a legal requirement that councils are notified of all private fostering arrangements – they will then check that the children or young people are kept safe and are well cared for in appropriate accommodation and happy.

Parents will still hold Parental Responsibility and will need to be consulted when decisions are made.