

PRIVATE FOSTERING

Definition

- The child is not considered 'looked after' (i.e. is not a child in care).
- This is an arrangement to care for a child made between a parent/person with parental responsibility, with another adult.
- Currently the regulations only apply to young people up to 16 years old (18 if disabled).
- There are statutory requirements for Local Authorities (Children Acts 1989, 2004; Private Fostering Arrangements 2005).

Notifications

A parent should notify the LA in writing;

- 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start,
- 48 hours after the arrangement has commenced,

Any professional who becomes aware of a private fostering arrangement should inform Call Derbyshire

It constitutes private fostering if:

- The adult is not a close relative (close relative is defined as sibling, aunt, uncle, grandparent and step parent).
- The child has left home and has moved in with someone that the PR holder is happy for them to live with.
- The child is unaccompanied, under 16, seeking asylum and intends to live with someone within their extended family and friend network.
- The arrangement is expected to last continuously for over 28 days.
- The child is from another country and staying with a host family for 28 days or more.

It does not constitute private fostering if:

- The adult is a close relative.
- The arrangement lasts less than 28 days.

The role of the Local Authority:

- The statutory requirements are clearly set out in the private fostering regulations. Once notified of a private fostering arrangement, begin the process. Duties include; a written assessment and a visiting and review pattern in line with those of 'looked after' children. Guidance and process is on MOSAIC including the recording of visits.
- To explore the possibility that the child is being trafficked. Establish that there is a genuine link between the child and the carers.
- To inform the parents if there are concerns about the arrangement proceeding or commencing.