

A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark hair in a braid, smiling and showing her teeth. She is wearing a grey turtleneck sweater. The background is a solid light purple color.

do you look after
someone else's
child?

private
fostering



Childrens Safeguarding



private fostering situations could involve:

- children sent to this country for education or health care by birth parents living overseas
- children living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or arguments at home
- teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend
- children whose parents' study or work involves unsociable hours, which make it difficult for them to use ordinary day care or after school care.

If you are privately fostering a child or children, you should read the next few pages of this leaflet. They will help you understand what you must do as a private foster carer. If you think you may be privately fostering a child telephone 0345 678 9021.

what must I do if I intend to foster a child privately?

The law requires that you tell your local council at least six weeks before the arrangement begins that you intend to privately foster a child, unless the arrangement is made in an emergency in which case the notification must be made within 48 hours.

Make sure the child's parents give you as much information as possible about the child, including their health, eating preferences, school, hobbies, religion and ethnic or cultural background. This will help you to understand the child and take better care of him or her.

Allow the child access to Social Work professionals and designated advocates.

It is an offence not to notify within the time specified. If in doubt, you should seek advice from the local council. Telephone 0345 678 9021.

how can I get help while I am privately fostering?

You can contact your local council for advice on caring for the child(ren) you are privately fostering.

will I get any support?

The local council has a duty to provide private foster carers with whatever advice and guidance necessary to assist them in caring for the child.

can I claim social security benefits and how do I go about it?

You may be able to claim tax credits and/or social security benefits such as Child Benefit, and possibly Income Support or universal credit, if you receive Child Benefit. Contact your local Benefits Agency Office who will be able to advise you.

what if the child leaves my care?

You must tell your local council within 48 hours that the child has left your care. You must also give the name and address of the person who will be caring for the child.

Shropshire Council may offer advice and support to young people between the ages of 16 and 21 who have been privately fostered. We will need to determine whether the young person is eligible for advice and support and if so, what we can offer. Financial support or assistance with accommodation will only be offered in exceptional circumstances, where there is a risk of the young person suffering significant harm and no other agency has a responsibility to provide this service.





children who are cared for on a full-time basis by people who are not their parents or a close relative* may be in private foster care.

Private foster care occurs when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for, and provided with accommodation, by an adult who is not a close relative*, for 28 days or more, by private arrangement between parent and carer.

The local council has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of privately fostered children.

* The Children Act defines 'close relative' in relation to a child as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt. They could be a full or half relative, and could be related by marriage. The term also includes a step-parent. A cohabitee of the mother or father would not qualify as a close relative, neither would extended family, such as great aunt/uncle or parent's cousins. Where children are cared for by a 'close relative', the situation is classified as 'family and friends care' and different arrangements apply.

where do I go for further information?

If you require further information on the contents of this leaflet,
please contact Shropshire's Customer Service Centre on **0345 678
9021**.

Safeguarding Children
Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

<https://www.shropshirefostering.co.uk/>



Childrens Safeguarding

photographs posed by models

