



Spotlight on Safeguarding: Private Fostering Awareness for Professionals

What is Private Fostering?

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative for 28 days or more.

Examples of private fostering situations:

- Children/Teenagers living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or arguments at home
- Children/Teenagers sent to the UK for education or medical care while parents remain abroad
- Children/ Teenagers living with host families for any number of reasons
- Teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend





When identifying a private fostering arrangement, professionals can ask questions like:

- Who is looking after the child? Is the child staying with friends, family, or someone you didn't know about? Who accompanies the child to school?
- Who has parental responsibility? Are you sure who has parental responsibility for the child? Who lives in the household?
- Is the child vague? Is the child vague about their routines, needs, or education?
- Is the child new to school? Is the child new to your school?

What should professionals do if they are aware of somebody being privately fostered?

There is a statutory expectation and a legal responsibility that professionals such as teachers, doctors, health visitors and the Police who come into contact with children should make sure that we are aware of individual private fostering arrangement when they come to their attention. Informing children social care is not a breach of confidentiality. You may even be helping to safeguard the welfare of a child.

Letting us know

If you are currently privately fostering or know of somebody who is, please call us on **01635 503090** or email: **child@westberks.gov.uk**

To find out more you can visit us on **www.westberks.gov.uk/privatefostering**