



TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

PRIVATE FOSTERING

GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS



WHAT IS PRIVATE FOSTERING?

Private fostering occurs when a child or young person under the age of 16 (under 18 if the child has a disability) is cared for and provided with accommodation for 28 days or more by an adult who is not a close relative e.g. grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, legal guardian or other person with parental responsibility. The period for which the child is cared for and accommodated by the private foster carer should be continuous, but if a child receives an occasional short break this is not considered to break that continuity.

Usually a birth parent chooses and arranges a private fostering arrangement and private foster carers do not have parental responsibility. Private fostering can take many forms for example:

- **Children or young people that must live away from their family because of separation, divorce or disputes at home**
- **Children or young people sent to this country for education or health opportunities**
- **Young person is living with a friend's family because of a dispute at home with their parents**
- **Young person is living away from their family to train and progress their sporting aspirations.**

WHAT IS THE LEGISLATION UNDERPINNING PRIVATE FOSTERING?

Privately fostered children are safeguarded by legislation set out in Part 9 of the Children Act 1989; the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005; and Section 44 of the Children Act 2004 effective 1 July 2005.

Standards of care and management for private fostering arrangements are set out in the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering (2005). You can find out more about the legal basis of private fostering on the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk or from the British Association of Adoption and Fostering at www.corambaaf.org.uk

Studies show that local councils are often not notified about private fostering arrangements, despite this being an offence under the Children Act 1989. When they are notified, it is nearly always after the private fostering has started.





It is essential that Trafford Childrens Services are aware of such arrangements so that we can safeguard and promote the welfare of potentially vulnerable children.

Ideally, notification should come from the carer or parent, although professionals also play an important role as they are often the people who have the first contact – for example children registering with a local GP or moving into a new school.

All professionals who work with or have contact with children and young people have a shared responsibility to ensure that privately fostered children are well cared for and are safeguarded from harm.

Professionals play an important role by identifying and notifying Trafford Childrens Services of private fostering arrangements and by ensuring parents and carers are aware of their responsibilities. By monitoring and supervising private fostering placements, we can all help to safeguard children who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

PROFESSIONALS

As a professional you are legally responsible to inform Childrens Services of any private fostering arrangements that you are aware of.

If you know that a child is being privately fostered, encourage the carer or parent of the child to notify Trafford Childrens Services themselves.

Always contact Trafford Childrens Services of any arrangement you become aware of on:

0161 912 5125 or **firstresponse@trafford.gov.uk**

TRAFFORD CHILDREN'S SERVICES WILL:

- Assess the suitability of private foster carers.
- Regularly undertake visits to the child or young person and monitor the overall standard of care.
- Ensure the child or young person is well cared for in a safe environment.
- Carry out Disclosure and Barring checks on the private foster carers and any person over the age of 16 in the household.
- Keep a record of private foster carers and children who are privately fostered.
- Ensure that advice and support to carers is made available when needed.
- If Trafford Children's Services decide that an arrangement is unsuitable and if the child or young person cannot be returned to their parents, they will decide what action to take to safeguard the child's welfare.
- Provide an annual report, including statistics of the numbers of privately fostered children in Trafford to Trafford Strategic Safeguarding





Trafford Strategic
Safeguarding Partnership

CONTACT US

If you would like further information about private fostering, please contact us on:

0161 912 5125 or
firstresponse@trafford.gov.uk

If you would like this leaflet in another language or format, please ask your social worker.

Talbot Rd, Old Trafford,
Stretford, Manchester M32 0TH



www.trafford.gov.uk