

we are
child
friendly
Leeds



Have you arranged for someone else to look after your child?

If so this could be a private fostering arrangement and you need to let us know!

Private fostering – important information for parents



What is private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is living with someone who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. This might be a friend, a great aunt, a cousin or someone else known to the child. A close relative is defined as a grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or step-parent by marriage.

Many parents who have arranged for someone else to care for their child don't realise they have entered into a private fostering arrangement when they have made informal arrangements with friends or extended family.

To keep vulnerable children safe and support families, by law parents and carers must notify their local authority if they have a private fostering arrangement in place.

There are many reasons why children are privately fostered. Such examples include those listed below.

- Children or young people who are sent to this country for education or health care by birth parents from overseas.



The children in this image are only models and are not privately fostered

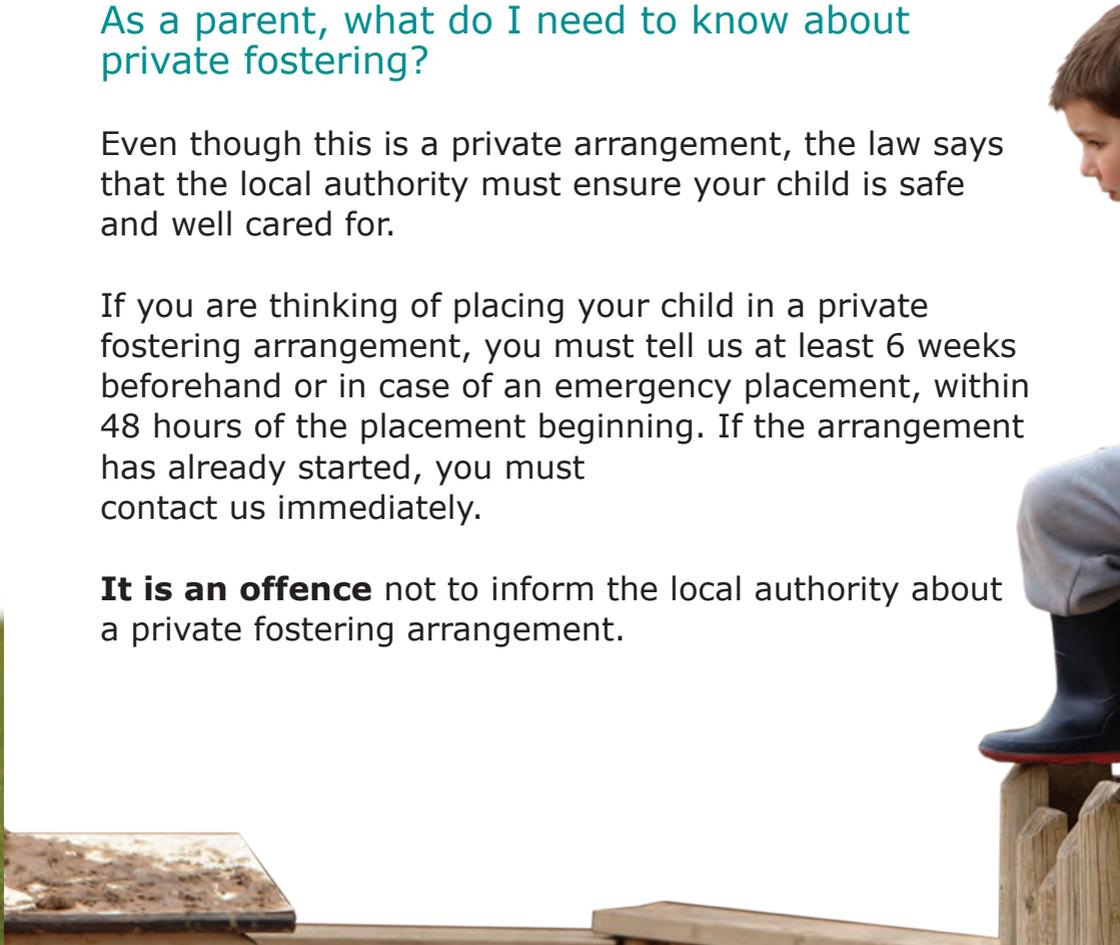
- Children or young people who are living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or arguments at home.
- Children or young people whose parents work or study long or anti-social hours.
- Teenagers living with their girlfriend's or boyfriend's family.
- Children or teenagers on school holiday exchanges that last more than 28 days.
- Children or teenagers who are on sports or music sponsorships living away from their families. A parent or an agency, such as a college or sports academy, would normally make such an arrangement.

As a parent, what do I need to know about private fostering?

Even though this is a private arrangement, the law says that the local authority must ensure your child is safe and well cared for.

If you are thinking of placing your child in a private fostering arrangement, you must tell us at least 6 weeks beforehand or in case of an emergency placement, within 48 hours of the placement beginning. If the arrangement has already started, you must contact us immediately.

It is an offence not to inform the local authority about a private fostering arrangement.



Am I giving up all rights to my child?

No, as the child's parent you retain parental responsibility for your child and this includes the continuing financial responsibility for the child's needs.

You should remain involved in all the decisions made regarding your child.

It is recommended that a written agreement is drawn up between the parents and the carers outlining the arrangements for the child and expectations of the placement. We can help provide advice and support with written agreements.



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What should I tell the carer?

You should give the carer as much information as you can about your child; information about their health, school, religion, hobbies, eating preferences, bed time routines and ethnic and cultural backgrounds are all important. This information will help the carer to understand your child and ensure that all their needs are met.

What is the local authority responsible for?

We work with parents, private foster carers, the child and anyone else involved in the arrangements, to ensure that everyone is aware of and understands their responsibilities.

We check that carers and other people living in their households are suitable to care for your child and that the place where your child will be staying is safe and of adequate standard. We can also give advice, training and help to the carer when needed.



Contact information:

To notify us about a private fostering arrangement or make further enquiries, please call: 0113 222 4403 or you can e-mail kinshipcareadmin@leeds.gov.uk

Further information is also available on our website: www.leeds.gov.uk

This information can be provided in large print, Braille, audio or a community language, please call: 0113 222 4403.



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