



**DO YOU KNOW A  
CHILD WHO ISN'T  
LIVING WITH  
THEIR PARENTS?**

**YES?** Then the child could be involved in private fostering and Knowsley Council needs to know to make sure the arrangements are suitable.

# DO YOU KNOW A CHILD WHO ISN'T LIVING WITH THEIR PARENTS?

There will be many young people in Knowsley living with someone who isn't their parent or a close relative. In this situation the child is often part of a private fostering arrangement. But, did you know that if you are involved in a private fostering arrangement you are legally required to inform the council about this?

## WHAT IS PRIVATE FOSTERING?

Private fostering is when a child under 16, or up to age 18 if disabled, is cared for by someone other than a parent or close relative for 28 days or more.

A close relative in this situation is either a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or even step-parents. They could be related by marriage or a full or half-relation.

Partners of the mother or father are not classed as a relative. Neither are extended family members such as great aunts, great uncles or parent's cousins.

Common situations for private fostering arrangements include:

- Children are living with a family friend because of a family crisis
- Teenagers are living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend
- A parent is admitted to hospital for long periods
- Parents send their children to this country from overseas for education or health care

It is not private fostering if the arrangement was made by Children's Services or if the person looking after the child is an approved foster carer.

## LETTING CHILDREN'S SERVICES KNOW ABOUT A PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENT

Anyone involved in a private fostering arrangement should let us know at least six weeks before the child moves to live with them. If the arrangement is made in an emergency then you must get in touch within 48 hours.



# WHY DO CHILDREN'S SERVICES HAVE TO BE INVOLVED?

The council has a legal duty to make sure private fostering arrangements are suitable and offer a good standard of care. This includes making sure the child is safe and well looked after, healthy, receiving a proper education and keeping in touch with the people who are important to them.

# WHAT WILL CHILDREN'S SERVICES DO?

We will allocate a social worker who will work with the child, parents and private foster carer to make sure the best possible arrangements are in place for the child. The social worker will make regular visits to see the child and provide support and advice to the carer where appropriate. The social worker will carry out an assessment of the place the child is living and checks on the people who live there too.

Unfortunately, many private fostering arrangements remain hidden, leaving children vulnerable. Help stop this happening by letting us know about any of these arrangements.



# WHAT NEXT?

You can contact Children's Services to let us know about a private fostering arrangement on 0151 443 2600.

Visit [www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk) for more information on private fostering.

# PRIVATE FOSTERING AND PROFESSIONALS

Many professionals who work with children will come across private fostering situations. Professionals in education, health and social care fields therefore have a shared responsibility to work together to ensure that all privately fostered children are well cared for and are safeguarded from harm.

Professionals from all agencies can play an important role by identifying and notifying Knowsley Children's Social Care of private fostering arrangements and by ensuring parents and carers are aware of their responsibilities.

By monitoring and supervising private fostering placements, we can help to safeguard children who may be vulnerable.

## WHAT SHOULD PROFESSIONALS DO?

Private Foster carers are legally required to notify their Local Authority but may not do so as they are unaware of this requirement. It is essential that Knowsley Children's Social Care is made aware of private fostering arrangements so that they can safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people who may be vulnerable.

If you know a child is being privately fostered, encourage the parent or carer to notify Knowsley Children's Social Care. However, you as a professional have a responsibility to ensure that Knowsley Children's Social Care is made aware of this arrangement and will need to follow this action up by notifying, Children's Social Care on **0151 443 2600**.

If you think you know a privately fostered child, do not hesitate to refer the matter, so that appropriate checks may be made.

**Visit [www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk) or phone 0151 443 2600 for more information.**