

# Practitioner Guide to Undertaking Private Fostering Assessments



This guidance has been written to assist in practice when undertaking private fostering assessments. It is informed by:

- [One minute guide: private fostering \(leeds.gov.uk\)](https://www.leeds.gov.uk/one-minute-guide-private-fostering)
- [Children Act 1989: private fostering - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/child-act-1989-private-fostering)
- [National minimum standards for private fostering - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-standards-private-fostering)

## Best Practice

Private fostering is an arrangement whereby a child/young person under the age of 16 (or 18 if the child has a disability) lives for 28 days or more in the care of someone who is not the child/young person's parent(s), a person with parental responsibility for the child or a relative of the child. This is contained in [S.66 Children Act 1989](#).

Private foster carers can be from the extended family, e.g. a cousin or a great aunt, **but cannot be a relative** as defined in the [S.105 Children Act 1989](#).

*'A relative under the Children Act 1989 is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or step-parent'.*

The law regarding private fostering changed greatly following the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000 who was privately fostered by her Great Aunt. Legislation introduced after Victoria's death requires local authorities to be proactive in investigating potential private fostering arrangements.

The local authority should be notified if a child/young person is living with someone who is not their parent, a person with parental responsibility or a relative as defined above for longer than 28 days. The local authority needs to be satisfied that the private arrangement is meeting the needs of the child/young person and the child/young person is safe. To be defined as 'private fostering', the child/young person must be living with that person for longer than 28 days and this should be continuous but can include occasional short breaks.

## Good Quality Private Fostering Assessments will include the following:

- The Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment must be completed within 45 working days of the date of notification
- The duration of the private fostering arrangement is understood by, and agreed between, the parents of the child/young person (or any person with parental responsibility) and the proposed/actual private foster carer
- The wishes and feelings of the child/young person about the proposed/actual arrangement (considered in the light of their age and understanding)
- A review of the suitability of the (proposed) accommodation
- The capacity of the proposed/actual private foster carer to look after the children of the household, including any other children already resident. This includes DBS checks of the carer and other household members
- The suitability of other members of the proposed/actual private foster carer's household, including other children already resident

- The proposed/existing arrangements for family time between the child/young person and their parents or any other person with parental responsibility and other persons who are significant and if already taking place, whether such contact is satisfactory for the child/young person
- To review the current financial arrangements for the child/young person and to ensure that that the parents of the child/young person, or any other person with parental responsibility have agreed upon the arrangements
- To ensure that consideration has been given to, and necessary steps taken, to make arrangements for care of the child/young person health, including registration with a new GP and dentist if necessary
- To ensure that consideration has been given to, and arrangements made for, the child/young person's education
- To review how day to day decisions regarding the child/young person are taking place and how this will be managed in the future
- To ensure that the child/young person's identity including ethnicity, gender identity, religion, culture, disability including those that are invisible needs are being met by the carer
- To ensure that support has been discussed and advised where required with the private foster carer, the parents of the child/young person or any other person with parental responsibility for the child/young person
- The assessment must be authorised by the relevant Children's Service Delivery Manager. This means they must decide based on the assessment about the suitability of the Private Fostering Arrangement

<b>About the Document</b>			
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