

PRIVATE FOSTERING

FACT SHEET FOR SOCIAL WORK PROFESSIONALS

Private fostering is when a child or young person under the age of 16 (*under 18 if disabled*) is cared for, for 28 days or more, by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative' (*step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts whether full blood, half blood or marriage*)



Different types of fostering arrangements

- Child centered arrangements
 - Provide child with life chances/better quality of life.
- Parent-centered arrangement
 - Allows parents to study or work.
- Short term
 - Educational, cultural objective.
- Family crisis arrangement
 - Made in response to a crisis within the birth family.
- Carer-centered arrangement
 - Benefit the carer in some way. This could be as some benefit to the carer for financial support, over and above maintenance support.



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.

What to record on Mosaic

- Relationships i.e. privately fostered by.....
- Work status: i.e. next private fostering visit (social worker, team)
- Ethnicity
- First Language (and if an interpreter is required)
- Religion
- Nationality
- Country of birth

What to consider during assessment.

Is the child or young person:

- Attending school
- Registered with a Doctor and Dentist
- Involved in any leisure activities

Social Work Visits

- Child / young person must be visited within 7 working days of notification
- Visits to be every 6 weeks in the first year and every 12 weeks in the second and further years
- Visits recorded under Private Fostering under regulation 8 visit (*Even if the child / young person is receiving a Child in Need visit the same day the Private Fostering Visit must be recorded separately as they have a different purpose*)
 - Record that the child/young person has been seen alone and spoken to alone (*or reason why not appropriate to be seen or spoken to alone*)
 - Record the views of the child/young person

Legal Status (Mosaic)

Within Mosaic the date of notification should be recorded.

Administrative support within the Kinship Team will record the notification date within the NON CLA Legal Status.

Points to note:

- Where private fostering arrangements are made by parents residing outside of the UK every effort must be made to make contact to confirm parental consent. This must be clearly recorded on Mosaic.
- Legal advice should be routinely sought where children have nobody in a position of exercising **parental responsibility**.
- If a child that was under a private fostering arrangement was transferred to an authority from a neighboring authority - the notification date should be the date the receiving authority took over responsibility for the child. It must be ensured that the neighboring authority was recording visits which they had undertaken up until the transfer date.
- If the child/young person is **living with the step parent** the social worker must record evidence of the marriage certificate seen or reasons why not.
- If notification was made of a private fostering arrangement **but the child's parents did not consent to this arrangement**, the notification date is the date of the referral, regardless of whether the child's parents agreed to the arrangement at this time (i.e. young person going to live with the boyfriend/girlfriends parents).
- When a child is **coming from abroad** (e.g. exchange students coming to stay with families), the private foster carer should notify the LA of the upcoming arrangement, and the LA should visit the private foster carer within 7 working days of receiving this notification. The LA is required to carry out an additional visit within 7 working days of the child arriving in the country.
- Child/young person privately fostered and returning home to the care of their parents for the 6 weeks school holiday, but the child/young person will be returning to the private fostering arrangement in September. Legislation relating to Private Fostering states that "if the private foster carer intends to resume the arrangement after an interval of not more than 27 days they do not need to inform the local authority. Since the child is with the parents for 6 weeks (i.e. more than 27 days) then the case would need to be closed and re-opened after the 6 week school holiday".
- Where a child is at a **boarding school or remains in a boarding school over the holidays**, it is not a private fostering arrangement. There is separate legislation and National Minimum Standard for this sector.

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