

# Policy Briefing

## WAKEFIELD & DISTRICT safeguarding children board

### Safeguarding Children Board

### Private Fostering

#### What is “Private Fostering”?

Private Fostering is when a child under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability) lives with someone other than a parent, a step-parent (or other person with legal Parental Responsibility) or a close relative (i.e. a grandparent, aunt/uncle, brother, sister) for a period that is intended to last more than 28 days.

A Private Fostering arrangement is a private agreement made between the parent and the adult who is offering to care for the child.

When a child is privately fostered, the parent retains parental and financial responsibility for the child. The law states that the parent must notify the Local Authority of the arrangement, and it is an offence not to do so.

Examples of private fostering situations include:

- Children or young people who are sent to this country by birth parents from overseas to live with relatives or to study here
- Children or young people who are living with a friend's family as a result of difficulties at home
- Teenagers living with the family of their partner

The Children Act 1989 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 require the council to promote and safeguard the welfare of privately foster children.

As a result, the Local Authority are required to visit the placement regularly. If the care provided to the child is not adequate, the Local Authority must intervene.

Although parents and private fosterers are required by law to notify the council, in reality, they do not always do this. As a result, it is often a professional (e.g. a teacher or a health professional) who will first become aware that a child is being privately fostered, and as a result, they also have a duty to notify the council.

**If you become aware of a Private Fostering Arrangement that may not be known to Wakefield council, you have a duty to ring Social Care Direct on 0845 850 3503.**

**Notifying the Council ensures that they can:**

- Carry out safeguarding checks
- Monitor the arrangements to ensure the child's needs are met
- Listen to the young person's wishes and feelings
- Provide support services where needed.

**If you require any further information about Private Fostering, please contact WDSCB on 01977 727047 or at [wdsbc@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:wdsbc@wakefield.gov.uk)**

**If you wish to speak to someone about an individual case that you think may be covered by the regulations, please contact Social Care Direct on 0845 850 3503.**

**Additional guidance can be found in Section 5.12 (4) of the multi-agency child protection procedures, which can be accessed online at:**

**[www.proceduresonline.com/westyorkscb](http://www.proceduresonline.com/westyorkscb)**