

## Private Fostering

Most children spend some time staying with friends and relatives at some time during their childhood. However, for some children these arrangements can be longer term. If a child under 16 years (or under 18 years if they are disabled) stays with people who are not related to them for 28 days or more, this is known as a private fostering arrangement and special rules apply.

Private fostering is the term used to describe an arrangement made privately (that is without the involvement of the local authority) between a child's parents and a carer of their choice.

A child is considered to be in private foster care if they are in the full time care of someone who is not directly related, nor is a legal guardian, for a total of 28 days or longer.

The period of 28 days does not have to be continuous. If, for example, a child stays regularly with a school friends family and this arrangement adds up to 28 days or longer, after which he or she returns home to the full-time care of their parents, then this would not be a private fostering arrangement.

However, if a child is cared for by a non-relative or legal guardian but returns to the parents at weekends, then this is a private fostering arrangement.

There are duties to know about and report what you think is a private fostering arrangement so that social care can make an assessment to ensure the person looking after that child or young person is promoting their welfare and safety.