

Private Fostering

Is your child living with another family?

Have you been looking after someone else's child for 28 days or more?

Do you know a child that's being looked after outside their close family?

If so, the child may be living in a private fostering arrangement. The law says you must tell Children's Social Care if you know about any private fostering arrangements. This is so we can make sure the children are well looked after and to give support to their carers.

What is private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child or young person under 16 years old - or under 18 if they have a disability - lives with someone for 28 days or more who is not a close relative, guardian or person with parental responsibility. A close relative would be a parent, step-parent, aunt, uncle or grandparent.

People become private foster carers for all sorts of reasons. They might be a friend of the child's family. They could be someone who is willing to look after a child they do not know, for example if that child is on an exchange trip or have parents who live overseas.

If Children's Social Care has made the arrangement, or the person who is caring for the child is an approved foster carer, this is not private fostering.

What to do if you know of a private fostering arrangement

The law says you must tell Children's Social Care if you know about any private fostering arrangements.

If you think you are privately fostering a child or know about a child who is being privately fostered, then don't worry, it is allowed. But you do need to tell us - we have a legal duty to ensure that all children who are privately fostered are cared for in a safe and suitable environment.

To report a private fostering arrangement, please call our Contact Centre in confidence on **020 8227 5988** or email **privatefostering@lbdd.gov.uk**