

# Who do I notify?

For more information and advice about what do next contact Children's Social Care on **0161 217 6028** or email **cyp@stockport.gov.uk**

For emergency help outside of normal office hours only contact the Social Care Emergency number on **0161 718 2118**.

如果你需要他人為你解釋這小冊子/單張的內容，我們可以提供免費的傳譯服務，請致電 0161 477 9000 史托波特傳譯部。

W przypadku gdybyś potrzebował pomocy odnośnie tej broszurki/ulotki, dostępne są usługi tłumaczeniowe. Prosimy dzwonić do Interpreting Unit pod numer 0161 477 9000.

যদি এই পুস্তিকা/প্রচার পত্রটি সম্পর্কে আপনার কোন সাহায্য দরকার হয় তবে বিনা খরচে আপনার জন্য দোভাষীর ব্যবস্থা করা হতে পারে। মেহেরবানী করে স্টকপোর্ট ইন্টারপ্রিটিং ইউনিটে ফোন করুন টেলিফোন নম্বর, 0161 477 9000.

اگر آپ کو اس کتابچے/ایفٹ کے بارے میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو مفت ترجمانی کی سروس دستیاب ہے۔ براہ مہربانی انٹرپرائٹنگ یونٹ کو 0161 477 9000 پر فون کریں۔

شما میتوانید از خدمات ترجمہ رایگان استفاده کنید و در صورت احتیاج به ترجمہ ی این نشریہ به طور حظوری با شماره تلفن 0161 4779000 اداره ترجمہ تماس بگیرید

تنوفر خدمۃ ترجمۃ شفویۃ اذا تطلبت مساعده فی فہم هذا الکتیب/النشرہ. نرجو الاتصال ارین رینیول علی رقم الهاتف: 0161 477 9000

If English is not your first language, an interpreter who is someone who can speak your first language, can be arranged to help you talk to us.

# Somebody else's child

## everybody's responsibility

**This leaflet explains about private fostering and the legal requirements and duties of professionals working with children to notify of private fostering arrangements**



“It is estimated that about 10,000 children in England are privately fostered.”

# What is private fostering?

**Private Fostering occurs when a child under 16 (if disabled, under 18) is cared for for more than 28 days by an adult who is not a close relative, by private arrangement between parent and carer. Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or marriage/affinity).**

## What is your role?

Professionals in the education, health and social care fields have a legal shared responsibility to work together to ensure that all privately fostered children are well cared for and safeguarded from harm. If you suspect that a child is privately fostered you have a responsibility to notify Children's Social Care.

## What are the rules governing private fostering?

Privately fostered children are not the same as fostered children. They are not in the care of the State but are safeguarded by the Children Act 1989. Children's Social Care has a legal responsibility to make sure the parent, the child and the person looking after the child are all receiving the right kind of support and to reduce any risks to the wellbeing, welfare and safety of the child.

Most children in private fostering situations are likely to be fine, but it is a legal requirement that Children's Social Care is notified of this arrangement by carers and the parents. Many carers and parents do not notify and are missing out on the support available to them.

## Why do private fostering arrangements occur?

There are many reasons why the birth parent chooses and arranges private foster placements.

*Some reasons may include:*

- Children coming from abroad to access the education and health systems.
- Children living with a family friend after separation.
- Divorce and arguments in the family.
- Teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Working antisocial hours make it difficult for birth parents to care for their own children.
- Parents are in prison.
- Parents have long term illness or mental health problems.

**“**8% of privately fostered children said they were never told why they were sent to live with strangers or distant relatives.**”**

Why not try the private fostering quiz at:  
**[www.privatefostering.org](http://www.privatefostering.org)**

**You can visit us at:**

**[www.stockport.gov.uk/privatefostering](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/privatefostering)**

## How to spot a privately fostering child?

There are certain signs to watch out for:

*At school:*

- Has the child turned up with a new carer?
- Do you know who the children in your class are living with?
- Has a child mentioned they are living with an "aunty" or someone they are not related to?
- Has the child mentioned that they are not staying at their usual home or their parents being away for a long time?
- Does the carer seem vague about the child's routines (bedtimes etc.), their health history, development checks and immunization record?
- Have official documents been seen before the child in your school is registered?

*At a GP clinic:*

- When a child is being registered at a practice ask them what their relationship is with the carer. Remember 'aunty' can be used as a colloquial term and may not mean a blood relative.

## What should professionals do?

If you think you know of a child being privately fostered, please don't ignore it. Speak to the child's carer and encourage them to notify Children's Social Care of the arrangement. In addition pass on the details to Children's Social Care yourself and a children's social worker will do the follow up work.

By contacting us you are ensuring that the child's welfare and safety come first and you will not be breaching any confidentiality rules.

However, be aware that some carers or parents may be anxious about having the local authority involved in their private fostering arrangement. This may be because they are concerned that the local authority may consider the arrangement unsuitable, because they have something to hide or simply because they think that it's nobody's business but their own.

## What happens once you have notified the local authority?

A social worker will be allocated who will establish contact with the family. They will run checks on the carer and will carry out an assessment to ensure the private fostering arrangement is suitable and that it can meet the welfare needs of the child.

The social worker will also talk to the young person to make sure they are happy in the arrangement, and they will check that the arrangement is safe and suitable. If the arrangement is deemed unsuitable, the parents may have to make alternative arrangements. In some cases this can mean the child coming into care. Where the arrangement is deemed suitable, the social worker will continue to visit at regular intervals to monitor the placement.

## Tips and advice

Visit the dedicated private fostering website at **[www.privatefostering.org](http://www.privatefostering.org)** for tips and guidance for professionals, carers, parents and children who are being privately fostered and to view the "somebody else's child" film.