

What is Private Fostering?

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, expected to last 28 days or more. Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of fullblood, half blood or marriage/affinity).

Why is it important?

The law requires parents, prospective private foster carers and anyone involved in arranging for a child to be privately fostered to notify Coventry City Council of the arrangement. However, many private foster carers (prospective and actual) parents and those working with children and families are not aware of the notification requirements. As a result, many private fostering arrangements remain hidden, leaving some children vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

To notify Children's Services about a private fostering arrangement, or for any further advice, call 024 7678 8555.

Private fostering



Looking after someone else's child, or know someone who is? Working with children and families? This leaflet is for you

The Council's Responsibility

All councils, including Coventry, are legally required to make sure that children being privately fostered are well cared for, safe and that their needs are being met.

We will:

- Speak with Parents
- Speak with the child and the carers and assess their situation
- Provide advice and support and regular visits to the child and the carers



What sort of children are privately fostered?

Privately fostered children come from all walks of life they can include:

- Children sent from abroad to stay with another family, usually to improve their educational opportunities;
- Children whose parents have gone away
- Teenagers who, having broken ties with their parents, are staying in short term arrangements with friends or other non-relatives;
- Children of prisoners placed with distant relatives;
- Language students living with host families;



The Parent's Responsibility

If your child is being looked after by someone who is not a close relative, and this is likely to continue for more than 28 days, the law requires you to notify your local council.



The Carer's Responsibility

If you are likely to be looking after someone else's child for 28 days or more, the law requires you to notify your local council.



Your responsibility if you are working with children and families

You have a responsibility to notify Children's Services if you become aware of any private fostering arrangements.

Private fostering arrangements can be hard to identify – don't be afraid to be curious.

At School

- One of the parents at your school has turned up with a child referred to as a "niece" or "nephew" who is staying with them for a little while
- A child in your class mentions they are staying with a stranger or distant relative

In a healthcare setting

- A patient turns up with a child you have not seen before
- A patient turns up with many different children on a regular basis that they refer to as "nieces" or "nephews"
- A child mentions that the person they are with is not their parent

