

They will also need to give the private foster carer permission for certain things to happen including:

- Changing the child/young person's name
- Changing the child/young person's school
- Taking the child/young person on holiday (includes domestic and international)

Legal requirements

Upon notification, Slough Children First (SCF) have a duty to visit and speak to the child, the parent, the private foster carer; and everyone in the private foster carer's household.

SCF will undertake a range of suitability checks including DBS checks on everyone in the household over the age of 16.

Other professionals, for example GPs and schools, also have a responsibility to report to SCF where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. SCF will monitor the safety and welfare of children in private fostering.

A social worker will be allocated to a child in a private fostering arrangement and will visit them each once every six weeks in the first year of the arrangement; and at least every twelve weeks in the second and subsequent year.



Contact us

To let us know about a private fostering arrangement please contact our MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) Team on any of the following ways:



Sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk



01753 875 362



The MASH Team, Slough Children First, Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2EL

Translations and other formats

If you'd like this document translated or in another format please let us know.

Complaints

If you have a private fostering arrangement, please talk to your social worker or their manager if you're unhappy about anything.

If this doesn't help, you can contact the Complaints Manager on [01753 875825](tel:01753875825) or at complaints@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk



Private fostering

A guide for professionals



What is private fostering?

The Children Act 1989 states that if a child is under the age of 16 (18 if they have a disability) and goes to live with someone who is not a close relative (like a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or step-parent through marriage or civil partnership) for 28 days or more they are in private foster care.

Who can privately foster?

People who are not a close relative that can privately foster include:

- A great aunt/uncle;
- A Cousin;
- A friend of the family;
- A neighbour.



This isn't a complete list so if you are unsure please contact Slough Children First's MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) Team via tel on 01753 875362 or via email at: Sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk



Examples of private fostering arrangements

There are many reasons why a child or young person might go into private foster care. This includes:

- Their parent/guardian is ill and unable to look after them for a while;
- They aren't getting on with other family members living in the house;
- They want to stay with their boyfriend or girlfriend's family;
- Their parent/guardian's study involves unsociable hours which makes it difficult for them to use ordinary day care or after school care.

Is private foster care like foster care?

No. Private fostering is very different from children who are looked after by Social Services and placed in the care of approved foster carers.

A privately fostered child is not 'in care' but the local council must check that they are being kept safe and properly cared for.

What the parent(s) must do

Let Slough Children First (SCF) know of the private fostering arrangement at least 6 weeks in advance or, where an arrangement is made at short notice/ in an emergency, they must tell us within 48 hours, and then at the end of the arrangement.

A private fostering arrangement does not give a private foster carer parental responsibility.

The child or young person's parent(s) or close relatives will still be responsible for them and they will be able to have regular contact with them.

They will need to provide the private foster carer with as much information about the child as possible, including about their health, dietary requirements, school, hobbies and faith.

