

*Partnership working to
promote positive outcomes
for privately fostered children
and young people in Bromley*



Private Fostering Arrangement

Information for professionals



THE LONDON BOROUGH

What is Private Fostering?

When a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if they are disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative for **28 days or more**.

Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts.

To qualify as private fostering, the arrangement has not been made by the local authority, and the child or young person is not being looked after by an approved foster carer.

If I am aware of private fostering, what do I need to do?

Often professionals are the first people to become aware of children living away from their parents, and some of these children will be living in private fostering arrangements.

Many private foster carers are excellent and safe, but if the local authority is unaware of the arrangement, they are unable to offer any support. Therefore, if you are aware of a private fostering arrangement, you have a duty to notify the local authority, by contacting our MASH Service.

Everyone working with children and families has an important role to play in safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable children.

Contact information

If you would like to inform us about a private arrangement, or for more information please contact:

MASH Team

T: 020 8461 7373

E: mash@bromley.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Team

T: 0300 303 8671



How do I recognise a privately fostered child?

The following questions have been designed to help you establish whether a child is privately fostered:

Is there anything unclear on files or records about the child's living arrangements?

-

Is the child living with someone other than a parent, someone with parental responsibility or a relative?

-

Do you know what the child's living arrangements are (who with, for what purpose)?

-

Is it clear who the child is living with, and what relation the person is to the child?

-

- Has the child been living, or is likely to live, away from home for more than 28 days, or a series of days totalling 28 days or more?

**Bromley's Private
Fostering Hub**

T: 0208 461 7442

E: fostering-duty@bromley.gov.uk

What does the local authority do?

Bromley have a duty to make sure all Private Fostering Arrangements are safe and suitable for children/young person.

Once a notification is received of a prospective private fostering arrangement, a social worker will arrange to carry out the following checks within seven days to establish whether the arrangement is suitable:

Visit the premises where it is proposed that the child will be cared for and accommodated

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Visit and speak to the proposed private foster carer and people living with the foster carer

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Visit and speak to the child alone to ascertain the child's wishes and feelings unless the officer considers it inappropriate speak to and, if it is practicable to do so, visit the parent or person with Parental Responsibility for the child

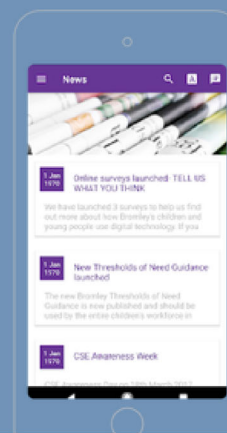
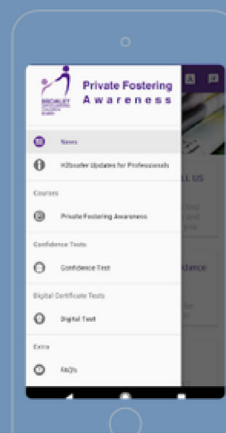
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- Investigate any other matters the social worker believes to be relevant such as whether an agreement for financial arrangements and for the care and maintenance of the child have been reached, arrangements for the child's education etc.

The social worker must ensure that the intended duration of the fostering arrangement is understood and agreed by both the parents of the child and the proposed private foster carer.

> Download

The 'Bromley Private Fostering Awareness App' on your mobile - compatible with both Apple and Android.



What is Private Fostering?

Is the child living with someone other than their parents with parental responsibility or a close relative?

YES



Is that person the child's step-parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (including by marriage)?

NO >

This is **likely** to be a private fostering arrangement

YES



Is the child under the age of 16, or if they have a disability, age 18 or younger?

NO >

This is **unlikely** to be a private fostering arrangement

YES



Have they or will they be living in this arrangement for 28 days or more?

NO >

This is **unlikely** to be a private fostering arrangement

YES



This is **likely** to be a private fostering arrangement

Contact information



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National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering

INTRODUCTION

The National Minimum Standards for private fostering are issued by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. The Secretary of State keeps such standards under review and may publish amended standards as appropriate.

These standards apply to Local Authorities. They are minimum standards, rather than 'best possible' practice. Many local authorities will exceed the National Minimum Standards in a range of ways. It is hoped that they will focus local authorities' attention on private fostering and lead to improvements in the way in which they carry out their duties and functions in relation to private fostering.

STANDARD 1

The local authority has a written statement or plan, which sets out its duties and functions in relation to private fostering and the ways in which they will be carried out.

STANDARD 2

The local authority is notified about privately fostered children living in its area.

The local authority promotes awareness of the notification requirements and ensures that those professionals who may come into contact with privately fostered children understand their role in notification.

STANDARD 3

The welfare of privately fostered children is safeguarded and promoted.

The local authority determines effectively the suitability of all aspects of the private fostering arrangement in accordance with the regulations.

STANDARD 4

Private foster carers and parents of privately fostered children receive advice and support to assist them to meet the needs of privately fostered children; privately fostered children are able to access information and support when required so that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted.

The local authority provides such advice and support to private foster carers and prospective private foster carers as appears to the authority to be needed. Private foster carers and prospective private foster carers are enabled to obtain information about entitlement to child and other financial benefits, and any necessary advice and support which will assist them to safeguard and promote the welfare of the privately fostered child.

STANDARD 5

The local authority provides advice and support to the parents of children who are privately fostered within their area as appears to the authority to be needed.

Parents are provided with advice and support to make alternative arrangements for the care of their child, where a private fostering arrangement has been prohibited and no other is contemplated.

Parents are provided with the contact details of an allocated social worker who they can contact if they have any concerns about the welfare of the privately fostered child or if they wish to request a visit.

STANDARD 6

Children who are privately fostered are able to access information and support when required so that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Privately fostered children are enabled to participate in decisions about their lives.

Privately fostered children are provided with information, in formats appropriate to their age and level of understanding, about their private foster carer and his responsibilities, the meaning of their privately fostered status, and their right to be safeguarded.

The local authority monitors the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering.

STANDARD 7

The local authority has in place and implements effectively a system for monitoring the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering. It improves practice where this is indicated as necessary by the monitoring system.

The local authority provides a written report each year, for consideration by the Director of Children's Services, which includes; an evaluation of the outcomes of its work in relation to privately fostered children within its area.

The local authority reports annually to the Chair of the Area Child Protection Committee (or its successor body, the Local Safeguarding Children Board) on how it satisfies itself that the welfare of privately fostered children in its area is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, including how it co-operates with other agencies in this connection.

Produced by:

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LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY
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