

Further information

For further information about private fostering, contact:

Transitional Care Team,
Tyldesley Area Council Office,
Town Hall,
Elliot Street,
Tyldesley.

Phone: 01942 404776

This leaflet is also available in ethnic-minority languages, on audio tape or CD and in large print. Contact us at Department of Adult Services, Customer Relations Unit, Civic Centre, Millgate, Wigan, WN1 1AZ. Phone: 01942 827173. E-mail: ssdcru@wigan.gov.uk

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Website: www.wigan.gov.uk

Private fostering

Information for professionals working with
children and young people



Children and Young People's Services

Private fostering

Information for professionals working with children and young people

Professionals working with children and young people have a shared responsibility to work together to ensure that all privately fostered children are well cared for and are safeguarded from harm.



Professionals can play an important role in helping to identify private fostering arrangements, and providing information to carers and parents who may be unaware of their responsibility to notify the council.

What is private fostering?

A private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (without being instigated by a local authority) for the care of a child under 16 years old (or 18 if he/she has a disability), by someone other than a parent or close relative, with the intention that it should last for more than 28 days.

A private foster carer maybe a friend of the family or the child's friend's parents, or someone unknown who is willing to privately foster a child. A private foster carer is **not** a parent, step-parent, legal guardian, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle.

Examples include:

- Children sent from abroad to stay with another family.
- Children on holiday exchange.
- Teenagers who have broken ties with their parents and are staying in short term arrangements with friends or other non-relatives.
- Children living with host families whilst studying.

Timescales

By law, Children and Young People’s Services must be informed about all private fostering arrangements, within the following timescales:

If the child is not yet living with private foster carers	Six weeks before the arrangement is due to start
If the child will move in with private foster carers in less than six weeks	Immediately
If the child is already living with private foster carers	Immediately

What is my responsibility?

Private foster carers are legally required to notify their local authority but many do not, often because they do not know that they have to. This means that Children and Young People’s Services are unable to check whether the child is being properly cared for.

It is vital that Children and Young People’s Services are aware of such arrangements so that they can safeguard and promote the welfare of potentially vulnerable children. Ideally, notification should come from the parent and carer, but professionals can also play an important role, as they are often the people who have the first contact in explaining to private foster carers and parents that they have a duty to notify the council.

If you know that a child is being privately fostered, encourage the carer or parent of the child to notify us.

By doing so you may help to ensure that the welfare of the child(ren) concerned is safeguarded and promoted.



Who do I contact?

Children In Need Duty Team

(8.45am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Phone: 01942 828300

What we will do

- Visit the child and private foster carer.
- Advise and support private foster carers, parents of privately fostered children, and privately fostered children.
- Determine if the private fostering arrangement promotes a child's welfare and protects them from harm.
- Help to make sure that the child's racial, cultural, linguistic and religious needs are being met.