

Implication of private fostering arrangements

- It is the responsibility of the birth parents and the private foster carer to make their own financial arrangements.
- Birth parents always retain their parental responsibility and private foster carers cannot provide consent for medical issues, school trips, holidays, sharing of the child's information.

Improving outcomes for privately fostered children

Privately fostered children can be extremely vulnerable, the council's children's services team have a duty to identify all privately fostered children and assist carers and parents to improve outcomes for them via Family Action Meetings.

Information & proformas are accessible from:

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- The fostering team
- St.Helens website
- Guidebooks
- Intranet
- They are available in different formats and languages.

Find out more

If you would like more information on private fostering, arrange a briefing or simply have a query, please contact the Fostering team on 01744 671199, or the First Response Team on 01744 676789.

Email: jennypickering@sthelens.gov.uk,
www.sthelens.gov.uk/a-z-services/f/fostering/



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St.Helens
Council

Private fostering

A guide for social workers



Under the Children Act 2004, all professionals have a duty to identify and notify Local Authority of private fostering arrangements.

This guide explains what private fostering is, how to notify and the process for assessment and support.

The Children Act (2004), defines a privately fostered child as:

- A child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) who is cared for, or proposed to be cared for, and provided with accommodation by someone other than:
 - A parent or his/hers
 - A person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility
 - A close relative of his/hers - i.e. aunt,uncle, step-parent, grandparent, sibling (whether of full blood or half blood)

And she/he has been cared for and accommodated by that person:

- for 28 days or more:
- or the period of actual fostering is less than 28 days but the private foster carer intends to care for him/her for a period of 28 days or more.

Q. Who is a Private foster carer?

A. Anyone other than his or her aunt, uncle, step-parent, grandparent, sibling (whether of full blood or half blood).

Q. When to make a private fostering notification?

A. As soon as you are aware of an arrangement - whether it has lasted 28 days or intended to last 28 days.

Examples of who is privately fostered

- teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend
- children living with host families, Liverpool football academy
- local young children living apart from their families, as a result of parental separation, divorce or arguments
- sofa surfers - adolescents/teenagers who are spending time with different friends
- children sent to this country for education or healthcare by parent's living overseas, i.e. children attending language schools/boarding schools
- trafficked children
- children whose parents have been admitted to hospital for long periods and the children stay with friends.

Why do we get involved with Private Fostering Arrangements?

Every child needs to be safeguarded by someone with legal power to take decisions for them and have parental responsibility (section 2/CA1989).

In the case of Private Fostering, a gap exists between the person that cares for the child and the person that holds the legal duty to safeguard the child.

St.Helens Council strives to ensure that the gap in legal responsibility does not render the child vulnerable and for the child's needs to be met. The aim is to work with all those involved, providing support to ensure the best outcome for the child. There is a duty to notify the Local Authority.

Childcare social worker duties

- Make notifications using PF1 via fostering team or first response team and input on ICS.
- Assess the viability of arrangement within 7 days using an Initial Assessment (or viability assessment if already on open case), via a joint home visit with a PF social worker from the fostering team.
- Record your initial visit to the child (during IA) under a regulation 8 form in case notes
- Record how and when you sought the views of the parent(s) in case notes and ensure that they have your contact details.
- Should the child/young person be assessed as a child in need, their needs will be assessed and monitored in accordance with Think Family procedures.
- Planning and meeting should always include parental involvement and consider reunification to parent care where possible. Young people's views must always be sought and recorded.
- Whilst the child/young person remains in a private fostering arrangement, they must continue to have regular statutory visits by the childcare social worker (ie every 6 weeks from point of notification for the first 12 months and every 3 months thereafter).
- Record these statutory visits on regulation 8 forms of ICS.

Fostering social worker duties

- The social worker will complete a PF assessment, which incorporates CRB/police checks/reference/employers/local authority/education checks and to gather information.
- The assessment is presented to PF monthly meeting to consider registration.
- Once registered, the social worker will continue to visit the carer's on a three monthly basis and will review the arrangement annually.