

## What is Private Fostering?

Private fostering occurs when a parent arranges for their child to be cared for by someone other than a parent or close relative for more than 28 days. A close relative means a step-parent, grandparent, brother or sister, aunt or uncle—either by blood or marriage. A child is anyone under the age of 16 or a disabled young person under 18.

**Rotherham**  
Metropolitan  
Borough Council   
Where Everyone Matters

### Contact information

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*A guide for professionals*

# Private Fostering in Rotherham



## Reasons why a child could be privately fostered

- A child who is living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or arguments at home.
- Teenagers who are living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- A child whose parents study or work involves unsociable hours and they are unable to use ordinary day care.
- A child who has been sent to this country for education or health care by birth parents living overseas.

Rotherham Council needs to assess these arrangements to ensure that the welfare of the child is safeguarded and promoted. Without the arrangement being overseen by the authority, children who are privately fostered are a particularly vulnerable group.

## What should professionals do?

Many professionals who work or who come into contact with children may come across private fostering situations.

Professionals in education, health, housing and social care fields therefore have a shared responsibility to work with the service to ensure that all privately fostered children are well cared for and are safeguarded from harm.

As a professional, if you know that a child is being privately fostered you should initially encourage the parent or carer/s of the child to notify the service. You should follow this action up by contacting the service yourself and reporting the situation.

## What does Rotherham Council do?

The authority has a responsibility to check the suitability of private foster carers; this involves carrying out an assessment on them and requesting statutory police checks to be completed.

An allocated social worker from the service will then supervise the arrangement and will make regular visits to make sure the child is ok and monitor the overall standard of care provided. This will allow the service to provide advice and support to the carers, parents and child when needed.

## What do the parents/carers do?

The parents or carers of the child should advise the service of the private fostering agreement at least 6 weeks before the child moves to the carers. Where a child has to move in an emergency, the parents or carers should notify the service within 48 hours.

The parent retains parental responsibility and will participate in all decisions about their child. The parent will provide the carer with as much information about the child as possible, including details about their health, dietary preference, school, hobbies, religion and ethnicity.

The carer should share details of what is happening in the child's life with the parent and ensure that they are included in any decision making regarding the child's upbringing.