

# Private Fostering

## A Guide for Parents

Your child is in a Private Fostering arrangement if:



- ✓ They are under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled)
- ✓ They are being looked after for more than 28 days by someone who is **not** a parent or someone with parental responsibility, or a close relative.

Close relatives are defined as follows:

- ✓ Grandparents,
- ✓ Adult brother or sister of full or half blood
- ✓ Aunt, Uncle or step-parent whether of full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership

If your child is living in a Private Fostering arrangement or if you are planning for them to live in a private fostering arrangement then, by law the local County Council needs to be informed. We need to check that your child is being well cared for and that they are not living with people who pose a risk to them.

### We will do the following things:

- ✓ We will check that parents are in agreement with their child living with the named person for the specified period.
- ✓ We will visit your child within 7 days of being told that they are living elsewhere.
- ✓ We will complete police checks on everyone over the age of 16 who is living in the household (known as Disclosure and Barring – or DBS - checks)
- ✓ We will visit your child every 6 weeks for the first year and every 12 weeks after that to make sure that they are safe and being well cared for.
- ✓ We will speak to your child alone during visits to ensure that they have a chance to tell us about any concerns they may have.
- ✓ If the arrangement becomes long term (usually over 1 year) we will talk to you and the carers about legal options to provide your child with security and stability.
- ✓ We will update you about any issues or concerns that we may have whilst your child is living elsewhere
- ✓ We will liaise with other settings that your child attends (such as school) to gain their views on your child's welfare.

### Your responsibilities:

- ✓ You need to let us know if your child moves out or if you are aware of anyone else moving into the household
- ✓ You need to let us know if you have any concerns about the level of care that your child is receiving.
- ✓ **You still have parental responsibility** for your child and we would encourage you to have as much contact with your child as possible.
- ✓ We would ask that you work in partnership with your child's carer and bear in mind that they may also want to make plans at weekends and holiday periods which include your child.

- ✓ You still have financial responsibility for your child. The person caring for your child does not get paid for doing this. You will need to transfer any benefits (Child Benefit, Tax credits) over to your child's new carer.
- ✓ You are responsible for informing your landlord that your child is living elsewhere.
- ✓ You are also expected to provide money to the carer for any additional expenses such as school uniform, school trips, etc.
- ✓ You will need to ask the Carers to show you their police disclosure certificate (DBS) and let the Social Worker know your views on the arrangement based on any details given by the Police
- ✓ If we feel that your child is at risk or is not being cared for will expect you to resume care of your child or to find an alternative suitable placement for them.
- ✓ We would ask you to discuss issues directly with the person who is caring for your child and for you to work in partnership with each other for the benefit of your child.
- ✓ You will need to provide the carer will full details of your child's medical history and sign a form to say what medical treatment you do and do not agree to your child receiving.
- ✓ You will need to inform your child's school of their new address and explain to the school how information about your child's progress and general issues should be dealt with. For example are you in agreement with your child's carer signing permission forms or do you want these sent directly to you? Who should receive school reports?
- ✓ You need to keep us informed if you move address or change your phone number.

If you know of a child who is being privately fostered, please contact Oxfordshire's Multi-agency safeguarding hub on **0345 050 7666** or online at [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\) | Oxfordshire County Council](http://Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) | Oxfordshire County Council)