

Safeguarding Children Who May Be Privately Fostered

This Quick Guide and the full Policy [Suffolk Private Fostering Statement of Purpose](#) must be used together with the full Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board Procedures and Guidance found at www.suffolkscb.org.uk.

Private foster care occurs when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for, and provided with accommodation, by an adult who is not a close relative*, for 28 days or more, by private arrangement between parent and carer.

**The Children Act 1989 defines 'relative' in relation to a child as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt. They could be a full or half relation, and could be related by marriage. The term also includes a step parent. A previous or current partner of the mother or father would not qualify as a relative; neither would extended family such as great aunt/uncle or parent's cousins. Source DCSF 2005*

Typical examples of private fostering arrangements are:

- Children sent to this country, for education or health care, by parents who live overseas.
- Children living with a friend's family because they don't get on with their own family.
- Children living with a friend's family because their parents' study or work involves unsociable hours, which make it difficult to use ordinary day care or after-school care.
- Children staying with another family because their parents have separated or divorced.
- Children from overseas staying with a host family while attending a language school or overseas students at boarding school who stay with a host family during the holidays.

All practitioners need to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they come across a Private Fostering arrangement. They must notify the local authority where the child is residing.

The local authority has a duty to ensure the welfare of such children is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted. They will:

- Visit the child within 7 working days of notification and complete a notification form.
- Complete a Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment of suitability and various Safeguarding checks including enhanced DBS checks on all household members over 16.
- Undertake regular visits to the child (every 6 weeks for the first year and 12 weekly thereafter) ensuring that the child is seen alone (unless deemed inappropriate).

If you know that a child is about to be privately fostered or that they may be already living in a private arrangement:

- You can contact the Fostering Changes for Children team for advice and guidance on what to do next.
- Make a referral to Customer First.

You can get advice from the following specialists:

Fostering Changes for Children Team - 01473 265025 or email FCFCT@suffolk.gov.uk

Make your referral to:

Customer First (24 hours) – 0808 800 4005

Further Guidance:

The Department for Education guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-private-fostering>

CoramBAAF Adoption & Fostering Academy - <https://corambaaf.org.uk/fostering-adoption/kinship-care-and-private-fostering/private-fostering>

Further information about all Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board publications can be found on our website. www.suffolkscb.org.uk