

PRIVATE FOSTERING

Info & Advice for
Host Families



DARLINGTON
Borough Council



What is private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not a close relative.

Who can be a private foster carer?

- Extended family (e.g., cousins, great-aunts/uncles)
- Family friends
- Partners or ex-partners not married to the child's parent

Note: Grandparents, siblings, aunts/uncles, and step-parents (by marriage/civil partnership) are not considered to be private foster carers.

Why must Children's Services be involved?

- To ensure the child's welfare
- To assess the suitability of the carer and home
- To provide support and advice to carers and parents

Responsibilities of a private foster carer

- To notify Children's Services at least 6 weeks in advance (or as soon as possible once you become aware that you are a private foster carer.)
- To engage with assessments and Social Worker visits to your home.
- To maintain the child's routines and cultural identity
- To ensure contact between the child and their parents
- To sign a written agreement with the parents outlining responsibilities

Children's Services will:

- Assign a Social Worker
- Visit the home where the child/young person will be living.
- Speak to all members of the household.
- Visit the child/young person.
- Make arrangements to support the child and placement throughout the private fostering arrangement.

Financial arrangements

- Must be agreed between you and the child's parents
- Children's Services do not provide routine financial support
- Inform the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) if receiving money for fostering



If the arrangement changes

- Notify Children's Services of any changes including:
- Ending the arrangement
- Planning to foster another child
- Changes in household or circumstances



Need help or advice?

Contact Darlington Borough Council's Children's Services on:

01325 406222

childrensfrontdoor@darlington.gov.uk

If you need to get in touch out of office hours, contact the emergency duty team on:

01642 524552



Follow our QR code to access the website for more information on Private Fostering



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