**Briefing 3: Private Fostering**

**What is Private Fostering?**

Private fostering is when a child or young person under the age of 16 (or 18 if they have a disability) is being cared for by someone who is not their parent or close relative for 28 days or more. **It should not be confused with fostering placements provided by Independent Fostering Agencies run by private companies.**

Close relatives include parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and step-parents.

It is not private fostering:

* If the carer is the child’s legal parent
* If the carer has parental responsibility
* If the carer is an approved foster carer and the arrangement was

made by social work

* If the arrangement lasts for less than 28 days

Some examples of Private Fostering situations include:

* A teenager living with friends or in the home of a boyfriend or girlfriend
* Younger children placed with friends of the family on a long-term
* basis following family breakdown or parent’s ill health
* Overseas students who are living with a carer for over 28 days
* Children in boarding schools who live with another family during

school holidays

* Children needing to be cared for because their parent(s) work

away from home

The law says that the Local Authority must be told about all private fostering situations. The child’s parent(s), private foster carer(s) or anyone else involved in the arrangement are legally required to inform children’s services.

**Your role as a professional**

Private foster carers are often unaware of the legal requirements to notify Brighton & Hove City Council of these arrangements, which can leave potentially vulnerable children at risk.

Education and health professionals are often the first people to become aware of these arrangements. Professionals becoming aware of a private fostering arrangement have a duty to 'satisfy themselves that Brighton & Hove City Council has been notified'.

* Professionals should encourage the child's parent or carer to notify the authority.
* Professionals should also consider if they need to contact Brighton & Hove City Council to ensure that the notification has or will be made.
* You will not be breaching confidentiality by notifying us, but you will be helping to safeguard a child.

Use the checklist below to find out whether a current or impending arrangement comes under the private fostering regulations. If the answer to the questions below is ‘yes’ then it is likely that a private fostering arrangement is in place, and you will need to contact the local authority – details are below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | YES | NO |
| 1. Is the child/young person under 16 years (or under 18 years if disabled)? |  |  |
| 2. Are they being provided with accommodation by someone other than a parent, relative or a person with parental responsibility? |  |  |
| 3. Are the parents in agreement with the arrangement? |  |  |
| 4. Has the child/young person been accommodated for a period of 28 days or more? If not, is the intent to accommodate for a period of 28 days or more? |  |  |
| 5. Are the child’s/young person’s parents/persons with parental responsibility living in separate accommodation from the child/young person? |  |  |

If you think that you know a child who is being privately fostered please contact Brighton & Hove City Council Advice Contact and Assessment Service on 01273 295920.

**Key Relevant Guidance, Policy and Procedures** *Please click on the links*

Click on the link to see a [video for professionals which has been produced by British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)](http://www.privatefostering.org.uk/profs/video) .

[Private Fostering Booklet](http://brighton.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/private_foster_booklet.pdf) Are You Looking After Someone Else’s Child?

Brighton & Hove Private Fostering Procedures

<http://brighton.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_private_fost.html>

For further information or to request copies of these briefings please contact the Children’s Services Service Development Officer on 01273 293736 or Carolyn.bristow@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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