

PRIVATE FOSTERING IN ROTHERHAM

A PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO PRIVATE FOSTERING



www.fosteringrotherham.com

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Private fostering occurs when a parent makes arrangements for their child to be cared for by someone other than themselves for more than 28 days. This may be with extended family (not a blood relative or someone connected through marriage) or a family friend. A child is considered to be anyone under the age of 16, or a disabled young person under 18.

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

Reasons why a child could be privately fostered

- Parental separation, divorce or arguments within the home.
- Teenagers who are living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Parents who study or their work involves unsociable hours and they are unable to use ordinary day care.
- Birth parents living overseas have sent their child to this country for educational or healthcare reasons and the child is living with a host family.

What should professionals do?

Many professionals who work with 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. It is an offence not to inform the Council of a private fostering arrangement.

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

What will we do?

Rotherham Council has a responsibility to check the suitability of private foster carers. This involves us carrying out an assessment and requesting statutory police checks to be completed.

An allocated social worker will then supervise the arrangement. They will make regular visits to make sure the child is settled and monitor the overall standard of care provided. This will allow us to provide advice and support to the carers, parents and child if it is needed.

What should the parents and carers do?

The law states that the parents or carer of the child must inform Rotherham Council six weeks before the arrangement is due to commence. Where a child has to move in an emergency, they should notify the service within 48 hours.

The parent will continue to retain 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 preferences, education, hobbies, religion and customs.

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.

Contact us

Tel: 01709 822532 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm)

Out of hours service: 01709 336080

(Monday to Friday 5.30pm onwards / weekends 9am onwards)

Email: fosteringduty@rotherham.gov.uk

Fostering Service

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