Bradford Children and Families Trust

Private Fostering

Guide for Professionals

Private Fostering is a term used when a child or young person under the age of 16 (18 if the young person has a disability) goes to live with someone else for 28 days or more that is not a parent or close relative. Since the Children Act 2004, it has been a legal responsibility for a Local Authority to know about children and young people who are Privately Fostered.

Children's Services have a duty to assess and monitor arrangements to make sure the child or young person is safe and their needs are being met.

Why are children or young people privately fostered?

We know that sometimes children and young people cannot live at home for lots of different reasons. Often, children in private foster care are able to live with a relative or a friend who they already know. A private fostering arrangement might happen for a number of reasons such as:

- A child or young person living with a family friend as a result of their parents breaking up or family fall out.
- A child or young person living with their friend's family.
- A young person living with their boyfriend or girlfriend.
- A child or young person sent (for educational or medical purposes) from another country without their parents and living with someone who is not a close relative.

Private Fostering also covers children or young people who stay at a residential school for more than two weeks during the school holidays.

Who is a close relative?

For private fostering, a relative can be a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or someone related to through marriage such as a step parent.

What you need to do as a Professional

Education, Health and Social Care professionals play an important role, as they are often the people who first become aware of a Private Fostering Arrangement.

If you know that a child is being privately fostered, you need to make a referral to Bradford Children and Families Trust. You will also need to let the parent and private foster carer about the referral.

If you have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of harm you should follow your Child Protection Procedures.

You can contact Bradford Children and Families Trust by phone: **01274 433999** or visit: **bit.ly/bcftpf**

www.bradfordcft.org.uk