

## **Private Fostering – 60 Second Guide**

### **What is it?**

- Private fostering is where a private arrangement has been made by the child's parent (or someone with parental responsibility) to live with a carer who is not a close relative of a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if the child is disabled).
- Close relative is defined as: grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or stepparent (by marriage) of the child.
- The arrangement is expected to last for more than 28 days and on a full time basis

### **Examples of Private Fostering Include**

- Children / young people whose parents work or study long and / or anti-social hours
- Children / young people sent to the UK for education or health care by birth parents from overseas
- Children / young people living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or difficulties at home
- Teenagers living with their partner's family
- **Privately fostered children are not looked after children.**

### **Parents and Private Foster Carers should notify the Local Authority**

- The Parent/s (or those with Parental Responsibility) and the private foster carer have a duty to notify the local authority of the name and address of the private foster carer, six weeks before the start of the private fostering arrangement.
- If the arrangement is already in place, they must notify the local authority at once. If the arrangement is made in an emergency and is intended to last more than 28 days, this information should be provided within 48 hours of the child being placed.
- Child care professionals from other agencies (such as teachers or health care practitioners) should notify the local authority if they become aware of or believe that a child is living in a private fostering arrangement.

### **Partner Agencies should notify the Local Authority**

- When completing forms with and meeting children, young people and their families, we should all ask questions about who lives in the household and who has parental responsibility — this can help in identifying a private fostering arrangement.
- Child care professionals from other agencies (such as teachers or health care practitioners) should notify the local authority if they become aware of or believe that a child is living in a private fostering arrangement.

## **The Role of the Local Authority and Arrangements in Havering**

- The Children Act 1989 places a legal duty on local authorities to protect and promote the welfare of privately fostered children, to check that the arrangements for the child/ren are safe and that the child/ren are well cared for.
- Section 44 of the Children Act 2004 extended these duties to include children who are proposed to be, but not yet, privately fostered. The duties are set out in the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005.

Where the local authority is informed of a proposed or existing private fostering arrangement:

- MASH to confirm private fostering arrangement.
- Open as private fostering in LCS - transfer to ISS for Social Worker and Fostering Team for a Supervising Social Worker.
- The child's Social Worker and Supervising Social Worker (Private Fostering) will undertake an initial Regulation 8 visit within seven working days of the date of notification
- A Social Worker (Private Fostering) from the MASH Team will carry out an assessment of the suitability of the arrangements for the child (Single Assessment)
- An assessing Social will carry out a private fostering assessment within 35 days of initial referral.
- The child's Social Worker and Supervising Social Worker (Private Fostering) will visit the child every six weeks during the first year of the private fostering arrangement and then every 12 weeks thereafter.
- The child should be seen at the placement and spoken to alone where this is appropriate.

**For more information and to notify Havering of a private fostering arrangement please contact:**

Havering Council Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)  
Phone Monday to Friday (9am to 5pm) 01708 433 222  
Out of hours/Weekends 01708 433 999

Email: [tmash@havering.gov.uk](mailto:tmash@havering.gov.uk)

Refer online: [www.havering.gov.uk/privatefostering](http://www.havering.gov.uk/privatefostering)