

Private Fostering is when a child under sixteen (eighteen if they are disabled) lives with an adult who is not a close family member for twenty eight days or more. It is a private arrangement made by the parents, carers and in some circumstances the child or young person. It is not made by the Local Authority.

It is **not** a private fostering arrangement if child is living with a:

- parent
- step-parent (by marriage only)
- aunt
- uncle
- brother
- sister
- grandparent

(Whether full or half-blood or by marriage)

A Privately Fostered child is not a looked after child.

In 2019-2020 over sixty three percent of children and young people made their own Private Fostering arrangements. Seventy three percent of children and young people had previously been subject to Child in Need or Child Protection Planning. These figures support the hypothesis that in Portsmouth the majority of Private Fostering arrangements are made by children and young people because they are not satisfied with the care they have received from their parents or guardians.

The majority of Private Fostering arrangements are "hidden". It is estimated that there are more Private Fostering arrangements in Portsmouth than the Local Authority have been notified about. This is reflective of the situation nationwide

Why is it important?

Private Fostering is a significant safeguarding issue. Privately Fostered children are living away from home with no adult with parental responsibility living with them. There is a risk to the "hidden" children as the arrangements remain unassessed and the children and carers are unsupported.

How do we do it?

All Privately Fostered children and their carers will have an initial assessment undertaken by the Case Holding Team and the Private Fostering Social Worker within one week. The Private Fostering Social Worker (who sits in the Fostering Recruitment Team) will undertake the Capacity to Care Assessment within forty two days of the notification and visit every six weeks thereafter to ensure the arrangements continue to meet the young person's needs. All of the children we support through Private Fostering arrangements are Children In Need.

For more information:

Visit the PSCP website: <https://www.portsmouthscp.org.uk/parents-carers/private-fostering/>

If you think you have identified an arrangement please call us on 02392 834071 and ask to speak to Aimee or Koren or contact Portsmouth MASH to discuss further.

Is the person caring for the child under a Private Fostering arrangement?

