

One Minute Guide

Private Fostering

June 2024

What is Private Fostering?

Private fostering is when a child under sixteen (eighteen if they have a disability) 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 frequently by the 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
 - someone with parental responsibility
- A privately fostered child is not a looked after child.
 - Many private fostering arrangements are "hidden". It is thought that there are more Private Fostering arrangements in Portsmouth than we have been told about. This is reflective of the situation nationwide.

Why is it important?

Private Fostering is a safeguarding issue. By law every Local Authority must satisfy itself that the welfare of children living in private fostering arrangements within their area is safeguarded and promoted. There is a risk to "hidden" children as the arrangements remain unassessed and children can be vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

Between 2020-2024 over 55% of young people made their own Private Fostering arrangements.

How do we do it?

All privately fostered children and their carers will have an initial assessment undertaken by the private fostering social worker within one week. The private fostering social worker (who works within the fostering team) will undertake the Capacity to Care Assessment within forty-two days of the notification and visit every six weeks thereafter to ensure the arrangement continues to meet the young person's needs. All the children we support in private fostering arrangements are subject to Child in Need planning and have their own social worker.

Contact the Private Fostering Social Worker.

Sharedmailbox.privatefostering@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub: 023 9268 8793

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

