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What is Private fostering?

Private Fostering is an informal arrangement where a child or young person under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) goes to live with someone who is not a family member/close relative for a period of 28 consecutive days or more.

A close relative is defined as a grandparent, uncle, aunt, step parent or older sibling.

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Why it matters?

Children living in these arrangements are vulnerable and could be at risk of harm. Victoria Climbié was a child brought into the UK and lived with a distant relative who went on to abuse Victoria and cause her death.

This was an unreported private fostering arrangement.

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Further information

For further information including what happens after a notification is received go to:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201100/private_fostering

To watch "Somebody Else's Child: A film about Private Fostering"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQDVzHXdISA>

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The Challenges

In many cases Local Authorities are not being notified before these arrangements are started. Also across the country a significant number of Private-fostering arrangements remain unreported.

Oldham Local Authority are committed to raise awareness and training via Safeguard board to inform all professionals across the partnership.

Examples of Private Fostering Arrangements

Children sent to the UK for education or health care by parents who live over-seas. Children attending a language school in the UK. Teenagers who have become estranged from their parents and are living with friends or wider family (not close relatives). Children staying with another family due to parents' divorce or separation.



Private Fostering

7 Minute Briefing

Notifications

The parent/carer has a legal requirement to notify the Local Authority (Children's Social Care) at least 6 weeks before the arrangement begins. If you know a child is being privately fostered, and you think the Local Authority is unaware, or you are unsure if a child is living in a private fostering arrangement and need further advice, please contact Oldham Children social care:
Email child.mash@oldham.gov.uk
Telephone Child MASH 0161 770 7777

What happens next?

Once a referral is made a social worker will be allocated to visit the child and undertake an assessment, this is to ensure the arrangement is suitable. Regular visits and meetings will take place to monitor and review the arrangement.

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Oldham Safeguarding Children partnership



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