

Why do Devon County Council have to be involved?

The Children Act 1989 gives all children's services in the country a legal duty to safeguard the wellbeing of privately fostered children.

This includes making sure they are:

- safe and well looked-after
- healthy
- receiving a proper education
- being encouraged to reach their full potential
- keeping in touch with people who are important to them
- living with someone who helps them value their culture and sense of identity
- properly supported when they become independent.

Despite this, many private fostering arrangements remain hidden, leaving children vulnerable to abuse and neglect.



Contact us

If you know a child who is being privately fostered contact Devon County Council's Private Fostering Team.

If you would like this in an alternative format such as large print, Braille or tape, or in a different language, please contact Devon County Council's Private Fostering Team.

Phone **0845 155 1013**

Email mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

Web www.devon.gov.uk/cyps-privatefostering

Privately fostered children are one of the largest groups of vulnerable children in the UK. Don't let them be forgotten!

Private fostering

Is your child living with another family?

Are you looking after someone else's child?



Rights and responsibilities for families and professionals

What is private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child or young person under 16 years old (or 18 if they have a disability) is looked after for 28 days or more by someone who is not a close relative, guardian or person with parental responsibility.

Close relatives include parents, step-parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents.



It is not private fostering if the arrangement was made by Devon County Council, or if the person looking after the child is an approved foster carer.

People become private foster carers for all sorts of reasons.

Private foster carers can be a friend of the child's family, or be someone who is willing to care for the child of a family they do not know.

Common situations are:

- children and young people living apart from their families
- children with parents overseas
- children living with host families for a variety of reasons
- children on holiday exchanges which last more than 27 days.

If you are unsure if your situation is private fostering contact **0845 155 1013** to discuss it.

Notifying Devon County Council

What the law says

By law, Devon County Council must be told about all private fostering situations. The child's parents, private foster carer and anyone else involved in the arrangement are legally required to inform us.

People involved in private fostering must contact us in the following timescales.

- If the child is not yet living with private foster carers **Six weeks beforehand**
- If the child moves in with private foster carers in less than six weeks **Immediately**
- If the child is already living with private foster carers **Immediately**

What should professionals do?

Professionals should make sure that Devon County Council know about all private fostering arrangements.

This includes a wide range of people who come in contact with children such as teachers, religious leaders, doctors and health visitors. Professionals should also encourage the child's parent or carer to notify Devon County Council. You will not be breaching confidentiality by notifying us, but you will be helping to safeguard a child.

What will Devon County Council do?

We will work in partnership with the child, parents and private foster carer to make sure that the best possible arrangements are in place for the child. This includes:

- visiting the child and private foster carer
- helping to make sure that the child's racial, cultural, linguistic and religious needs are being met
- offering advice and support to the child, their parents and private foster carer.

