

Do you know anyone  
who is looking after  
someone else's child?



What it means and  
when it happens

Think   
Private Fostering

## Private Fostering

Private fostering is when a young person is being cared for by an adult (the 'private foster carer') who is not their parent and:

- is not the young person's legal guardian or a close relative. Close relatives are grandparents, step-parents (if married), brothers and step-brothers, sisters and step-sisters, aunts, and uncles or the civil partner of a close relative;
- the young person is under 16 (or under 18 if they are disabled);
- the arrangement lasts for more than 28 consecutive days; and
- it is a full time care arrangement.

The private foster carer is responsible for the young person's health, education, and social, physical and emotional needs. They cannot care for more than three young people (excluding their own children) at once.

Privately fostered young people are one of the largest groups of vulnerable children in the UK. There are many reasons why private fostering happens, but the most common are:

- young people staying with family friends when their parents are unable to care for them, for example when they are sick, working abroad or in prison
- young people from abroad sent to stay with relatives, often to improve their education
- teenagers who have broken ties with their parent and are staying with friends or non-relatives
- young people staying with host families whilst on study courses.

## The role of Children's Social Care

North Yorkshire County Council's Children's Social Care is legally responsible for the safety and welfare of all privately fostered young people in the county. They will work with the young person, parents and private foster carer to ensure the best possible arrangements are in place. This includes:

- checking on the suitability of each private fostering arrangement;
- visiting the young person, and the private foster carers;
- offering advice and support to the young person, the parents and the private foster carers; and
- helping to make sure the young person's racial, cultural, linguistic and religious needs are being met.

Once a private foster arrangement is assessed as suitable, a social worker will visit the young person at least every six weeks during the first year, and then every twelve weeks. They will need to see the young person alone at some point at every visit to make sure all their needs are being met.

Parents and potential carers considering entering a private fostering arrangement must tell Children's Social Care at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start – **it is an offence not to**. Anyone already involved in a private fostering arrangement, or needs to make an emergency arrangement, must tell them immediately. You can contact them through North Yorkshire County Council's Customer Service Centre on **01609 780 780** email **customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk**

The parent and private foster carer must tell Children's Social Care about any changes in circumstances such as:

- the young person moving address;
- if someone living in the household is convicted of an offence; or
- if someone joins or leaves the household.

Professionals who come into contact with young people must also inform Children's Social Care about all private fostering arrangements. They should also encourage the young person's parents or carer to tell them about existing or planned arrangements.

## Find out more

The North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board has produced information leaflets for parents and private foster carers. You can download a copy or you can get printed copies from North Yorkshire County Council's Customer Service Centre on **01609 780 780** email **customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk**

You can also go to

**[www.ecm.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/privatefostering](http://www.ecm.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/privatefostering)**

### Contact us

W: **[www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk)** E: **[customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk)**

T: **01609 780 780** (Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm  
closed weekends and bank holidays)

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You can request this information in another language or format at

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