

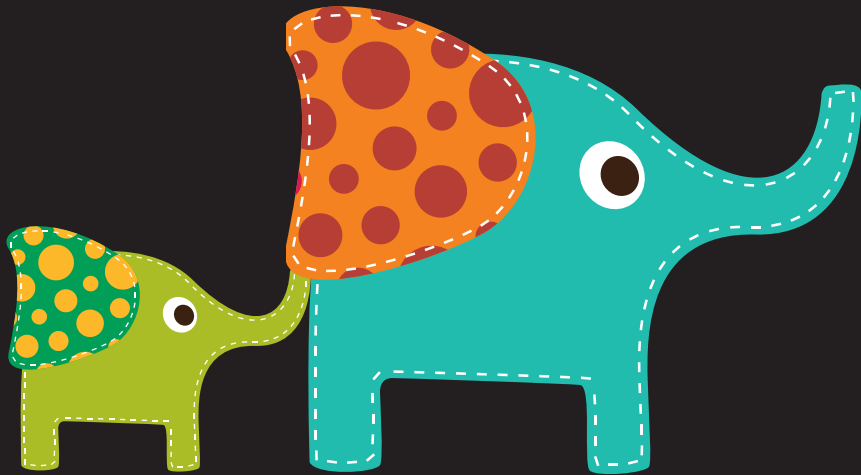
Bolton Safeguarding Children

Parents and carers guide to Private Fostering

Is someone else looking after your child?

Are you looking after someone else's child?

Did you know that we can help carers access advice and support?



Private fostering, what is it?

If a parent decides that it is best for their child to be cared for by someone who is not the child's:

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

and if this is for more than 28 days and the child is under 16 (18 if the child is disabled), it is called a private fostering arrangement and the parent or carer must inform Bolton Children's Services.

Does this happen often?

Yes, there are probably over 10,000 children in the UK who are currently being privately fostered.

Examples of children who might be privately fostered:

- children staying with a friend of the family because of parents separation, divorce or problems at home
- children staying with extended family such as a cousin or great aunt
- children sent to this country for education or health care by birth parents living overseas
- teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend
- children whose parents' work or study involves unsociable hours, which makes it difficult for them to use ordinary day care or after school care
- teenagers who have broken ties with their parents and are staying with friends
- children living with host families whilst pursuing courses of study
- children receiving respite care provided by someone other than a relative

Private fostering is not arranged or paid for by Bolton Children's Services.

My child is privately fostered or I am thinking about private fostering, what should I do?

You need to let Bolton Children's Services know as soon as possible. It would be best if this was at least six weeks before your child goes to live with the private foster carer. If the arrangement is made in an emergency you need to let them know within 48 hours.

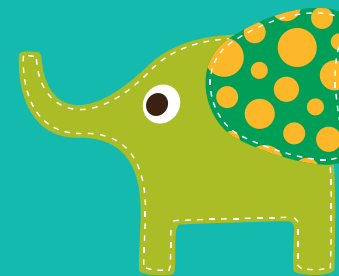
A social worker will then make regular visits to make sure the child is happy, healthy, safe and well looked after.

Remember! You are committing a criminal offence if you do not notify Bolton's Children's Services of the arrangement.

What else can I do?

You can also make sure that the carer:

- has written and detailed information about your child
- understands your child's routine, language, culture, diet, health needs and long term plans
- has written permission, from you, to allow them to sign a medical consent form for your child
- has enough money to cover the cost of looking after your child
- is clear how long the arrangement will last, and most importantly, know how to contact you

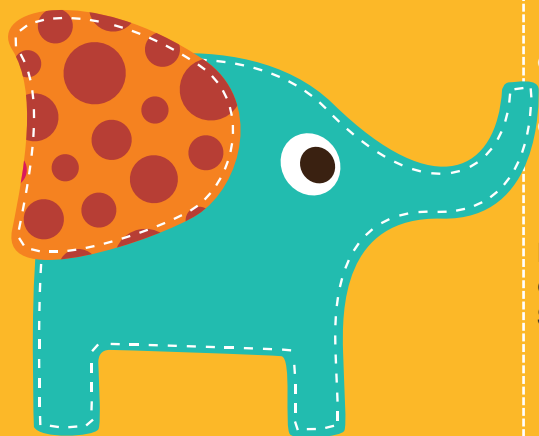


If the private fostering arrangement ends you must let the social worker know within 48 hours. You should also confirm the name and address of the person who will be caring for the child and the details of that arrangement.

I think I'm a private foster carer for someone else's child, what should I do?

You need to let Bolton's Children's Services know as soon as possible. Ideally at least six weeks before the child comes to live with you. If the arrangement is made in an emergency you need to let Bolton's Children's Services know within 48 hours. You must tell them straight away if a child is already living with you.

You must tell children's services at least 48 hours before a child leaves your care and confirm the name and address of the person who will be caring for the child and the details of that arrangement.



What will Children's Services do?

Bolton's Children's Services will put the child first and work with parents and carers to make sure the arrangement is right for the child.

They will make sure children are safe and happy with the arrangement.

They will make sure that carers are:

- trustworthy - they will check police records on the carer and members of the household
- have a home that is safe for your child
- are supported to care for your child if necessary
- able to look after your child's physical, emotional, educational and cultural needs
- provided with enough money from you to care for your child

Not sure if your child is privately fostered or if you are private fostering? Or if you think a child you know is being privately fostered then ring the numbers opposite to discuss your situation.

How to let Children's Services know

Please telephone the number below to let us know of your situation.

Tel: 337729 or 337730

Out of hour's service **01204 337777**

