

Quick guide for professionals: Safeguarding children who do not live at home (Private Fostering)

This quick guide is intended to be used as a supplement to South Gloucestershire's [Private Fostering Policy](#). You can also view South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership guidance.

Definitions: 'Close relative' in relation to a child is a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt, including full and half biological relations, aunts & uncles through marriage or civil partnership, and stepparents (through marriage).

Private foster care is when a child under the age of 16 (or under the age of 18 if disabled, including a diagnosis of ADHD) is being cared for by an adult who is not a close relative*, for 28 days or longer, and when this has been arranged privately between the parent and carer (i.e., not through children's services involvement).

There are many different types of private fostering arrangement, including:

- Families who request support for their children when going through separation or divorce.
- Children who go to live elsewhere due to difficulties at home, commonly disagreements with parents or other family members.
- Parents who require the support of friends or extended family to help with childcare due to unsociable work hours or commitments.
- Children from abroad who come over for education or health purposes.
- Children from abroad who attend language schools and stay with a host family, including in the school holidays.

All professionals are required to notify the local authority when they come across a current, or intended private fostering arrangement and must provide as much information as possible.

If you know of a private fostering arrangement, or become aware of one or, if you are unsure about a situation and would like to talk it through, please call us on 01454 868222.

What happens next?

The local authority has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of any child who is privately fostered or will potentially become privately fostered. We will visit the child within 7 days, and then complete regular visits at a minimum of every 6 weeks for the first year, and every 12 weeks thereafter. We will complete a private fostering assessment, including

checks, references and enhanced DBS checks for everyone in the household over the age of 16.

Useful guidance and information:

ART Team for referrals – 01454 866000 / Accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk

Coram BAAF Adoption & Fostering: [What is private fostering? | CoramBAAF](#)

Statutory Guidance Children Act 1989 Private Fostering: [Children Act 1989: private fostering - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)