



Bury Integrated Safeguarding Partnership

Working together to safeguard adults and
children

Private Fostering

Please visit

<http://courses.buryscbglobal.net/AvailableCoursesList.asp>

To view all our current training courses.



Definition of Private Fostering

Private Fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative' for 28 days or more (Children Act 1989 s.66 England).

Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or marriage/affinity).

It is customary in many cultures to teach children to call their elders 'Uncle,' 'Aunt' and other relational names. We should not assume they are related until the arrangement has been checked with their parents or legal guardian.



A short film

This 9 minute short film talks about the different forms that may lead to private fostering

[YouTube video](#)



The Local Authority has a duty to...

1. Assess the arrangement

- Assess risk to the child and act on any safeguarding concerns;
- Verify the relationship between the child and carer;
- Run checks on all over 16's in the household;
- Contact the parents and obtain their consent;
- Explore the child's wishes and feelings.

2. Monitor the arrangement

- Regular visits;
- Speak with the child in private;
- Build relationship with the child;
- Explore long-term plans and offer advice / support as necessary;
- Establish parental responsibility, identify immigration issues, consider return of child to his/her family, consider plans after 16 and after 18.

3. Raise awareness in the community and with partner agencies



Education

Some privately fostered children may be attending your school.

Consider:

- Has a new child arrived from overseas?
- What is the relationship between the child and carer?
- Who accompanies the child to school meetings and events?
- What documentation has been provided?
- Is the child's carer vague about the child's educational history, routine and needs?
- Has the child mentioned that they are no longer living with their parents or are living with a new adult?

Consider that this may be a **private fostering arrangement** that should be referred to your local children's services.



POLICE

You may encounter a child in a private fostering arrangement, for example during a call out or an investigation.

Consider:

- Are you clear about the relationship between the carers and the child?
- Missing child? How much does the carer know about the child's needs, routines and whereabouts? Do they seem vague?
- What does the child call his/her carer? Uncle? Aunt? Grandparent? Are they actually related?

Consider that this may be a **private fostering arrangement** that should be referred to your local children's services.



Social Workers

Good practice involves:

- Following your procedures for monitoring and assessing privately fostered children
- Being flexible with the current definition and verifying the relationship between the child and carer
- Verifying the arrangement and its legitimacy with the parents
- Obtaining the child's wishes and feelings
- Considering the child's needs, including their immigration status and who has parental responsibility.

CFAB can help you with obtaining assessments and information from overseas. You can make a referral and obtain free advice from an Inter-country Social Worker at CFAB.

Call 020 7735 8941



Housing and Benefits

You may receive claims for housing and benefits involving children in private fostering arrangements.

Consider:

Has a new child joined the family?

Is the relationship between the child and the carer clear?

Is there frequent movement of children in and out of the household?

Consider that this may be a **private fostering arrangement** that should be referred to your local children's services.



Health

Children in private fostering arrangements may not have someone in the UK with legal rights to make important medical decisions.

Consider:

- Who has parental responsibility?
- Are you obtaining consent from the right person?
- Are there any discrepancies or lack of clarity about the child's living arrangements?
- Is the child living with an 'Uncle' or 'Aunt' or other relative who claims that the parent is overseas?

Consider that this may be a **private fostering arrangement** that should be referred to your local children's services.



Communities

Children from overseas in private care arrangements may be your neighbours, your children's school mates, or part of your faith community.

Consider:

- Are you clear about who the members of the household are and their relationship to the child?
- How much does the carer know about the child's needs, routines and whereabouts? Do they seem vague?
- Has the carer attended religious services/meetings/festivals with a new child or a series of different children?

Consider that this may be a **private fostering arrangement** that should be referred to your local children's services.



Consider...

The motivation for the care arrangement, is it:

- **Child-centred ?** arrangements made ostensibly to improve the life chances of the child in some way, e.g.. education, health, conflict.
- **Carer-centred?** arrangements in which the carer has a major stake.
- **Parent-centred?** arrangements made because the parent could not care for the child, e.g. due to working or studying long hours.
- **'Family crisis' arrangements?** arrangements made in response to a family crisis or breakdown.

(Shaw, Catherine, et al. (2010) *Research Into Private Fostering*)

What does the motivation for the arrangement tell us about the needs and risks to the child?



Welfare concerns

The majority of children in private care arrangements will be happy and thrive. However, some will:

- Suffer from loss, separation and emotional distress
- Suffer abuse and exploitation
- Have no contact with their parents
- Move from carer to carer; sometimes across countries
- Have no one in the UK with legal rights to make important decisions for them
- Remain in the UK without any formal documents and without legal status or other rights such as the right to work and education

All these issues can be better managed, prevented and resolved if children are identified and referred to the right services sooner.



Reasons for care arrangements

The most common reasons for care arrangements for overseas children include:

- Children in language school or other education (short and long-term arrangements)
- Children who come to the UK for a “better life” (often long-term)
- Children whose parents cannot care for them because they work or study long hours
- Unaccompanied / separated children
- Exploited children (child trafficking)
- Children brought in from abroad with a view to being adopted

(Shaw, Catherine, et al. (2010) *Research Into Private Fostering*)

The reasons behind the care arrangement are not always clear and will require an assessment from a social worker.



Victoria Climbié's Story

In 2000, Victoria Climbié died of 128 separate injuries. She was neglected and abused by her great aunt and aunt's boyfriend.

Victoria's mother and father sent her from the Ivory Coast to the UK for a better life. This was a private arrangement made between her parents and the great aunt. Victoria was failed by a number of agencies who could have stepped in to protect her.

A public inquiry was conducted by Lord Laming. This resulted in a shake up of how agencies should work together to safeguard children.

New regulations were issued in 2005 (England) and 2006 (Wales) for all private fostering arrangements to be notified, monitored and checked by social workers.



‘Whose Child?’ A Short Film

This 12 minute short film tells the story of three children from overseas who are living in the UK with someone other than their parents or legal guardian.

[YouTube video](#)



How to make a referral

- Let the child's carer know that they have a duty to notify children's Services. They will be assessed and can receive support and advice from a social worker.
- Contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
0161 253 5678
- Let them know you are aware of a child living with someone who is not their parent or legal guardian.



Thank you for watching today!

If you require further advice on Private Fostering
please contact
Helen Delamare, Strategic Lead on 0161 253 7532 or
h.delamare@bury.gov.uk

Useful links;

[Private Fostering Procedures](#)

[CFAB](#)

[Private Fostering Website](#)