



adoption • fostering • kinship

Private Fostering Awareness Day 5 November 2025

How will I recognise if a child is privately fostered?

If you're aware of a child under 16 years of age (or 18 if they have a disability) who isn't residing with their parent(s), they could be in a private fostering arrangement if they've been away from home for more than 27 days and are living with an adult who isn't a close relative.

- Has the child mentioned that they are no longer living at home / living with someone else?
- Is the child accompanied to school by someone other than a parent/recognised carer?
- Has a patient turned up at the GP surgery with a new child/ series of different children?
- Is a child frequently absent from school?
- Is there anything unclear on files/records about the child's living arrangements?
- Is it clear who the child is living with, and what relation the person is to the child?
- Has the child come from overseas? Do you know the reason for the child's entrance to the UK?
- Is the child in the UK for the purpose of education?
- Is the child an unaccompanied asylum seeker?

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Identifying when a child has been trafficked

Does the child:

- Appear not to have any money but has a mobile phone and/or is expensively dressed?
- Receive unexplained/unidentified phone calls?
- Possess money and goods not accounted for?
- Exhibit self assurance, maturity and self-confidence not expected in a child that age?
- Have a prepared story very similar to those that other trafficked children have given?
- Show signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted infection, or has an unwanted pregnancy?
- Have a history with missing links and unexplained moves?
- Go missing for periods that are unexplained?
- Appear to be malnourished?
- Appear to be misusing alcohol, drugs or other substances?
- Live with adults who are not their parents and with whom they do not appear to have a good relationship?
- Appear to have limited freedom of movement?
- Live with a number of other unrelated children?
- Appear not to be registered with a GP or enrolled in a school?
- Show disengagement with school activities?
- Appear excessively frightened of being deported?
- Dress in a manner inappropriate for her age?
- Have a boyfriend or girlfriend much older than them?
- Regularly get picked up by adults who wait for them?
- Self-harm, including cutting self and overdosing?
- Appear to have an eating disorder;
- Appear to be compromising their sexual health?



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