

Guide to **PRIVATE FOSTERING**



**Are you looking after
someone else's child?**

**IF SO, PLEASE READ
THIS LEAFLET!!**

Are you looking after someone else's child? If so, please read this leaflet!!

Children who are cared for on a full-time basis by people who are not their parents or a close relative may be in private foster care.

Private foster care occurs when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for, and provided with accommodation, by an adult who is not a close relative for 28 days or more, by a private arrangement between parent and carer. A close relative is a grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle. Cousins and more distantly removed relatives are considered to be Private Foster Carers.

The child is not a 'looked after child' under this arrangement, but the Council has a duty to undertake an assessment to safeguard and promote the welfare of privately fostered children.



For further advice and information, or to notify us that you are a Private Foster Carer, please contact the Children's Assessment and Safeguarding Service:

Tel: **01472 326292 Option 2**

e-mail: nelcchildrensfrontdoor@nelincs.gov.uk

Visit: **Cleethorpes Civic Offices, Knoll Street, Cleethorpes, DN35 8LN**

What is Private Fostering?

Private fostering situations could involve:

- Children sent to this country for education or health care by birth parents living overseas
- Children living with friends or family as a result of parental separation, divorce or arguments at home
- Teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend
- Children whose parents' study or work involves unsociable hours, which makes it difficult for them to use ordinary day care or after school care

If you are privately fostering a child or children you should read this leaflet – it will help you understand what you must do as a private foster carer.



What must I do if I intend to foster a child privately?

The law requires that you inform North East Lincolnshire Council's Children's Assessment and Safeguarding Service at least six weeks before the arrangement to privately foster a child begins. However, in the case of an emergency placement, notification must be made within 48 hours.

Make sure the child's parents give you as much information as possible about the child, including their health, eating preferences, school, hobbies, religion and ethnic or cultural background. This will help you to understand the child and take better care of him or her.

It is an offence not to notify the Children's Assessment and Safeguarding Service if you are privately fostering a child. If in doubt, please ask for advice – contact details are on the page overleaf.

How can I get help while I am privately fostering?

You can contact the Children's Assessment and Safeguarding Service for advice on caring for the child(ren) you are privately fostering.

Will I get any support?

There is a range of support services and support networks available for private fosterers. In exceptional cases financial help may be available.

Can I claim any benefits and if so, how do I go about doing it?

You may be entitled to claim tax credits and/or Child Benefit. Please contact the Child Benefit Hotline on: 0845 3021 444 or go to <https://www.gov.uk/benefits-adviser> for further information.

What if the child leaves my care?

You must tell us within 48 hours if the child leaves your care. You must also provide us with the name and address of the person who will be caring for the child.

