



**BRIEFINGS**

# **Private Fostering**

**Luton**

## What is private fostering?

A care arrangement, for more than 28 days, in which a child under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability) is looked after (living with) somebody who is not:

- Their Parent
- Their Step parent
- Someone with parental responsibility or a legal order
- A close relation, defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership or step parent).

This arrangement is made by the carer and the person with parental responsibility, privately.

Children who are looked after by the Local Authority are not considered privately fostered.

The period of 28 days should be continuous, but the continuity is not broken by the occasional short break. The duration or regularity of the short break is not specified within guidance. The important starting point would be to understand the arrangement.

**The Local Authority has a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children living in private fostering arrangements in their area.**

## What are my responsibilities as a Luton Council employee?

- Be alert to any possible private fostering arrangement and share any information with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. It is okay to not be sure, it is better to have a conversation than not. There is a statutory duty on professionals to notify Children's Services if they become aware of a private fostering arrangement.
- Do not make assumptions about relationships/connections - ask
- Help to promote awareness of private fostering in Luton
- Children's Social Care must make a visit to a potential private fostering arrangement within 7 days. A single assessment should be completed, alongside the Private Fostering Team involvement.

## Signs a child may be privately fostered

- An adult mentions that they are caring for a child who is not their immediate relative
- An adult is seen with a child who has not been seen before.
- An adult attends regularly with different children referred to as their 'niece' or 'nephew'.
- A child mentions that the person they are with is not their parent.
- A child says there is another child staying at home with them.
- A child attends an independent boarding school and does not return home for the holidays.
- Teenagers who, possibly having broken ties with their parents, are staying in arrangements with friends or other non-relatives.
- A child is a language student and living with a host family.
- A child, pursuing a sports career, stays with a host family. For example, children who are on trial with a local football club

## Where can I find more information?

### Luton Children's Services Procedures

<https://lutoncs.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/private-fostering?search=private%20fostering>

### Luton Council Website

[https://m.luton.gov.uk/Page/Show/Health and social care/children and family services/Pages/Private-fostering-who-is-sleeping-in-your-house.aspx](https://m.luton.gov.uk/Page/Show/Health%20and%20social%20care/children%20and%20family%20services/Pages/Private-fostering-who-is-sleeping-in-your-house.aspx)

### CORAM BAAF

[Private fostering | Frequently asked questions | CoramBAAF](#)

All Luton Council employees are able to register for free for a membership account with CORAM BAAF. This provides access to the advice line, where CORAM BAAF can provide advice and guidance on specific matters.

Coram BAAF members can contact the Coram BAAF Advice Line on [0300 222 5775](tel:03002225775) (Mon–Fri, 9am–1pm) or [send a message](#).

### Kinship Charity

[Private foster care - Kinship](#)

## Key contact details

The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub should be informed in the first instance to any new private fostering arrangements, who will then liaise with the Fostering Service. The Fostering Service would encourage their involvement from the beginning.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

[MASH@Luton.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@Luton.gov.uk) 01582 547653

Fostering Service

[Fostering@luton.gov.uk](mailto:Fostering@luton.gov.uk) 01582 547636