

Herefordshire Social Work Academy  
**Private Fostering Quick Guide**

**Definition:** A privately fostered child is a child under 16 (or 18 if disabled) who is cared for by an adult who is not a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, step parent (including civil partnerships), sister or brother where the intention is for the child to be cared for in that person's home for 28 days or more.

**Notification.** Parents or others with Parental Responsibility and Private Foster Carers must inform the Local Authority in writing at least six weeks before starting the arrangement or, where no prior notification is given, when the placement begins.

**Allocation.** Unless the child already has an allocated Social Worker they will be allocated to the Assessment team for the completion of a Private Fostering Assessment. If already allocated, this must be completed by the allocated social worker. The additional service user need of private fostering must be started as soon as notification is received. A social worker must complete an **initial visit to the private foster carers home within 7 working days of notification.**

**On the Initial Visit the social worker must:**

- Visit the prospective carers at home, speak to them and all members of the household;
- Visit and speak to the child alone;
- Speak to and, if practical, visit the parents;
- Ensure that parents and private foster carers understand the purpose and likely duration of the arrangement;
- Ascertain the wishes and feelings of the child
- Check the suitability of the accommodation, the capacity of the private foster carer to look after the child, the suitability of other members of the private foster carer's household;
- Ensure that parents are involved in planning for the child and explore whether the child's needs may be better met by providing services to the child and parent at home;
- Encourage the parents to draw up a written agreement with the private foster carers as to their respective expectations and responsibilities.

**Where the child has already been placed, ensure that the:**

- child's development in all aspects is satisfactory, that the standard of care being

given to the child is appropriate and that the child's needs are being met;

- check that the financial matters are in order and the contact arrangements are working;
- ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to meet the child's health needs including consent for medical treatment;
- ensure that arrangements are in place for the child's education;
- ensure that any necessary links are or will be established with other agencies for example because of the child's disabilities and/or special educational needs.

A full **Private Fostering Assessment** (on Mosaic) must be completed and sent to the Private Fostering Lead within **42 working days** of the notification.

There is no need to complete a Child and Family assessment in most cases. If the private fostering assessment identifies additional needs then there will need to be either a CIN plan or family support/early help referral depending upon the level of need.

Upon completion of the assessment the child will remain with the assessment team for the duration of the private fostering arrangement.

**Visiting Frequency.** The allocated social worker must visit the child and carer at their home within seven working days of the placement, or the date when notification was received if later, and then visits will be made **every six weeks in the first year and thereafter at least three monthly.** Visits must be recorded on the CIN visit step on Mosaic and private fostering option chosen.

**Advice and support** is available from the fostering team. Please contact the Recruitment and Assessment Fostering team manager who will allocate a Social Worker to buddy and/or complete joint visits if required.

**Full Procedures and Guidance can be found at:** [Private Fostering \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://PrivateFostering(proceduresonline.com))

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