

Private Fostering Bulletin

Welcome to Kent County Council's new Private Fostering Bulletin which will inform you about news and developments in private fostering.

What is Private Fostering?

A private fostering arrangement occurs when a child under 16 (or 18 if the child is disabled) is cared for and lives with an adult who is not a relative for 28 days or more.

The Children Act 1989 defines a relative as a step parent (by marriage or civil partnership), grandparent, step grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt.

Private fostering is a private arrangement made by the parent(s), (or those with parental responsibility) for someone to care for their child because they are unable to do so (permanently or temporarily). This may be due to parental ill health, a parent going abroad or in to prison, a child being bought to the UK to study English, the relationship between the child and parent has broken down etc.

Parents and Private Foster Carers have a duty to inform the Local Authority regarding private fostering arrangements, but professionals need to recognise these arrangements and have a duty to inform the Local Authority.



How to refer

Contact the Front Door Service: 03000 411111

Send a Request for Support:

<https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ChildrensPortal.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx>

News

There are 25 children in Kent who are subject to private fostering arrangements currently. This is the lowest it has been in the last 5 years. This could be due to a decreased number of English language students visiting Kent. We saw some increases though, such as international boarding school pupils who stayed with host families while their schools were closed and increased breakdowns in relationships between teenagers and parents due to relationship strains during lockdown. We are worried that there are a number of private fostering arrangements which the local authority has not been notified about.

Kent County Council is in the process of developing a Private Fostering App for children, parents, private foster carers and professionals. Watch this space for more news on this.

Private Fostering Awareness week is 12th to 16th August 2021. This is the time to ensure everyone in your organisation is aware of Private Fostering!

What happens following a referral?

A social worker will visit the child in the private fostering arrangement within 7 days and complete an assessment of the Private Foster Carer within 45 days. Various checks will be undertaken to ensure this is a safe place for the child to stay. The child will be visited every 6 weeks, more often if they are subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan.