Information for parents and carers

We are here to offer help, support and advice...
What must I do if I intend to foster a child privately?

When a child is privately fostered the child’s parents still have full parental responsibility in the eyes of the law. The law requires that parents and carers and any others directly involved in the arrangement must notify their local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement begins that they intend to privately foster a child. If an arrangement is made in an emergency the notification must be made within 48 hours.

It is an offence not to notify your local authority.

The child’s parents should give the carer as much information as possible about the child, including their health, eating preferences, school, hobbies, religion and ethnic and cultural background. This will help the private foster carers to understand the child and take better care of them.

What does it mean for the child?

Children in private foster care have the same rights to protection and access to services as children living within their family home. Notification ensures that safeguard checks are undertaken, that the circumstances surrounding the arrangements are fully investigated, that the young persons ‘wishes and feelings’ are listened to, and that where appropriate, preventative and support services are provided. In certain circumstances the Children & Young People’s Directorate may provide ‘aftercare’ services to children who have been privately fostered.

Will I get support?

A range of support services may be available, and in cases where a child is assessed as a child in need additional support may be available. There will be an allocated worker for each privately fostered child. There may also be local support networks in place for carers.

What if the child leaves my care?

You must notify Gloucestershire’s Children & Young People’s Directorate within 48 hours that the child has left your care. You must also give the name and address of the person who will be caring for the child.
If you wish to make a referral, or clarify whether an arrangement meets the criteria for private fostering, contact:

**Private Fostering Social Worker:**
Gloucestershire County Council
2nd Floor
Quayside House
Shire Hall
Gloucester
GL1 2JU

t: 01452 427758
e: private.fostering@gloucestershire.gov.uk
www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/privatefostering

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